TOWARD SCIENCE IN AESTHETICS

Selected Essays

BY

THOMAS MUNRO

THE LIBERAL ARTS PRESS

Selected Essays on Aesthetics and Art Education

By THOMAS MUNRO

The author's foremost professional concern is to help develop aesthetics from a vaguely speculative subject into a more objective science. In 1928, his first major work, *Scientific Method in Aesthetics,* appeared and became almost immediately a milestone in the new direction which aesthetic theory was to take in a large measure from then on. It has done much to liberate aesthetics from its old, narrow limits as a purely abstract "philosophy of beauty," and to base it on empirical studies of the arts and related types of experience.

Since then, Dr. Munro has published many articles developing this approach: some investigating art and art appreciation in order to formulate a general science of aesthetics; some outlining a broader method of art education, including both creation and enjoyment. In accordance with these two fundamental aspects of Munro's writings, the essays here collected are offered in **Two Volumes.**

The present volume contains the essays which, in the words of the author, "deal with various aspects of the present transition of aesthetics toward scientific status."

The second volume deals with the author's essays in the philosophy and psychology of art education on its various levels.

(CONTINUED ON BACK FLAP)

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By

THOMAS MUNRO

THE HILLA VON REBAY FOUNDATION
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PREFACE

The idea of a scientific approach to the understanding and evaluation of the arts arouses much less skepticism and antagonism today than in 1928, when *Scientific Method in Aesthetics* was first published. Since then, the study of the arts and related modes of experience from a standpoint of empiricism and naturalistic humanism has steadily gained in strength and scope, as compared with the older approaches based on mysticism, absolutism, supernaturalism, and transcendentalism. Among scholars in the field, it is widely recognized that aesthetics is no longer a branch of speculative philosophy, devoted to the vain attempt to set up universal laws of beauty and good taste, but first of all a descriptive inquiry which seeks to find out and state the facts about works of art as a kind of observable phenomena, in relation to other phenomena of human experience, behavior, and culture. Secondarily, and in a very tentative, relativistic way, it attempts to throw some light on questions of aesthetic value, both general and particular; not by setting up fixed laws and absolute standards, but by helping to formulate, test, and revise hypotheses in the light of available information about the uses and effects of art. Modern aesthetics does not try to prove definite goals or standards of value for the arts, but it can help to base evaluation on tested knowledge, collective experience, and rational inference.

In these endeavors, aesthetics is following somewhat in the steps of the older sciences, pure and applied, such as biology, sociology, and psychology. In their practical applications, value judgments are also made, and tentative goals and standards formulated. From these sciences, naturalistic aesthetics derives much relevant information and suggestions as to method. It must, however, work out its own methods to a large extent, in relation to the distinctive phenomena of art and of the creation, appreciation, and use of art. Methods appropriate to the older sciences are not adequate here and, when applied, often achieve only a specious appearance of science without touching the central problems of art and aesthetic experience.

Aesthetics is following these older sciences at some distance behind, and is far from being able to achieve an equal degree of

certainty and accuracy. Science is something which develops gradually, slowly, in one realm of phenomena after another. It is possible to achieve some amount of scientific method in a new field, or in part of a field, without leaping all at once to the high degree of proof and exactness attained many centuries ago in dealing with simpler phenomena. When "science" is defined too rigorously, as restricted to the mathematical and physical sciences, the effect is to obscure the possibility of gradual progress toward verified, systematic knowledge in other fields. A subject can be in a state of transition toward science for many generations, with appreciable steps toward that goal, but without achieving logical proof or exact measurement. These essays attempt to mark out a path ahead for aesthetics, to show how the advance can be made and why it is worth while to make it. They try to envisage a future science of aesthetics which will be a valuable addition to world culture from the standpoint of knowledge and of beneficial use. They are not proposed as examples of what scientific aesthetics ought to be, but as doing a little of the preliminary exploration and spadework necessary to that end.

Many persons unacquainted with the subject, on hearing the word "science" applied to aesthetics, jump to false conclusions. Hence it is necessary to warn the hasty reader promptly and often that "scientific method in aesthetics" does not, in these pages, mean an attempt to prove definitions of beauty, rules for the artist, or laws as to what people ought to like in art. It does not mean an effort to measure beauty, or to dissect art and artists in a laboratory and inspect the dead remains under a microscope. It does not mean an attempt to transform aesthetics into an exact science overnight. What it does mean—something much more harmless, modest, and practicable—is set forth in the following essays.

These essays, written during a period of twenty-eight years, have been selected for the present volume as possessing some continuity of thought and purpose. All have been revised and co-ordinated from a contemporary standpoint, with numerous additions and some cuts to avoid unnecessary overlapping. They all deal with various aspects of the present transition of aesthetics toward scientific status: with the data and problems it must face, with some possible aims and methods in doing so, and with the various branches of aesthetics which are developing in the course of such investigation. Some of these prob-

lems are more directly susceptible to scientific treatment than others, and the way in which they are discussed is accordingly different. Only one of the essays—on "The Afternoon of a Faun"—illustrates my belief that aesthetics should include a study of particular styles and works of art. I hope to assemble more studies of this kind in a future volume.

The scientific approach is conceived throughout, not as opposed to the older philosophical, critical, and historical approaches, but as co-operating with them. Insofar as all are free and rational, there can be no essential conflict between them. The transition to science, now at last proceeding in the fields of ethical and aesthetic value, is only a later phase in the same unending search for true knowledge and wisdom which the Greek philosophers first clearly began, and in the modern search for power to benefit man through understanding physical and human nature.

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It is pleasant to be able to thank at least a few of the many who have helped in various ways to make this book possible. Chief among these are the trustees and staff of the Cleveland Museum of Art, especially its President, Harold T. Clark, and its Director, William M. Milliken. Their friendly encouragement and support throughout my quarter-century of work as Curator of Education there, and in the special effort to help develop American studies in aesthetics, have been of inestimable value. Welcome aid to this effort from William C. Treuhaft through the Morris and Bertha Treuhaft Memorial Fund is also cordially acknowledged. I am grateful also to the administration and faculty of Western Reserve University, especially Deans Webster G. Simon and Carl F. Wittke, for the continued opportunity to teach courses in aesthetics as Professor of Art in its Graduate School. Much of the content of these essays has been developed there. It is a pleasure to thank also the officers and trustees of the American Society for Aesthetics, especially Helmut Hungerland, for friendly co-operation in editing and publishing the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* since 1945, and for permission to reprint the several essays in this book which first appeared there. My wife's help and encouragement throughout these busy years, including the careful correction of each text, has been invaluable. I am also much in debt to the excellent secretaries and editorial assistants who have helped in preparing the manuscripts and proof: especially Mrs. Dorothy S. Kroko, Miss Dolores Filak, and Miss Adeline Schirripa. Thanks for permission to reprint certain of these essays or parts of them are extended to Norton and Co. of New York, Henry R. Hope and the *College Art Journal,* Marvin Farber and the University of Buffalo Press, Jean Lameere and the *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* in Brussels, and the *Bulletin* of the Western Arts Association.

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CONTENTS

I. SCIENTIFIC METHOD IN AESTHETICS

CHAPTER ONE: EXPERIMENTAL AESTHETICS

1. The present situation in aesthetics 3
2. The experimental attitude in science 5
3. Observation 8
4. Art criticism as an approach to aesthetics 9
5. Its tendencies toward science 11
6. "Experimental aesthetics" broadly conceived 14

CHAPTER TWO: THE ANALYSIS OF FORM

1. A descriptive attitude in criticism 18
2. Organic perception of a complex form 20
3. Tentative criticism 25
4. Comparison of forms and of media 28
5. Types and styles of form 30
6. Redefinition of terms 33
7. Histories of form and style 35
8. Questionnaires for analysis 38
9. Comparison of findings 43

CHAPTER THREE: AESTHETIC PSYCHOLOGY

1. Its task in general 47
2. Suggestions from laboratory psychology 49
3. From genetic and comparative psychology 51
4. From educational psychology 52
5. From psychoanalysis 54
6. From behaviorism 56
7. The production of art 58
8. Education for creativeness 60
9. Appreciation 61
10. Words as data for psychology 64

CHAPTER FOUR: VALUATION AND VALUE STANDARDS

1. The need of descriptive study 67
2. Enjoying and criticizing 68

3. Analyzing an aesthetic situation 70
4. Predicting future aesthetic values 73
5. Nonaesthetic values of art 75
6. Revising social standards 77
7. Control and aesthetic experience 84

II. AESTHETICS AS A SCIENCE: ITS DEVELOPMENT IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

1. Can aesthetics be a science? Criteria of scientific status 85
2. Development of the prerequisites for scientific aesthetics 90
3. Current trends in American aesthetics 96
4. Trends in aesthetic value theory 100
5. Naturalism and supernaturalism 108
6. Divisions of aesthetics, present and future 114
7. The recent development of aesthetics in America 116
8. Growth of the arts and related activities in America .. 125
9. Specialization and synthesis 127
10. The joining of several streams of thought in present aesthetics 134
11. The philosophy of art and beauty 135
12. The criticism of art 138
13. Aesthetics in the narrow sense, as theory of beauty 140
14. So-called "experimental aesthetics"; the laboratory or psychometric approach to the psychology of beauty and aesthetic preference 140
15. Tests and measurements in the field of art 142
16. Kunstwissenschaft; science or knowledge of art 143
17. Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft; general science of art 144
18. French, English, and recent German contributions .. 148

III. KNOWLEDGE AND CONTROL IN THE FIELD OF AESTHETICS 151

IV. FORM IN THE ARTS: AN OUTLINE OF AESTHETIC MORPHOLOGY

1. The problem of objective description and classification in studies of art 160

2. Modes of transmission. Presented and suggested factors in aesthetic form 161
3. The components of aesthetic form 165
4. Spatial, temporal, and causal organization 168
5. Developed components 170
6. Modes of composition in art 170
7. Types and styles of art 177
8. Comparative analysis 181

V. THE MORPHOLOGY OF ART AS A BRANCH OF AESTHETICS

1. Aesthetic morphology as descriptive study of aesthetic form 183
2. Difficulties in observing and describing works of art 186
3. Aims and values of aesthetic morphology 187

VI. STYLE IN THE ARTS: A METHOD OF STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

A. Traits, types, and styles 192
B. Style-names and their meanings; various bases for distinguishing styles 195
C. The field of distribution of a style; extensive and restricted styles. The definition and extension of a concept of style 195
D. Three ways of defining a style-name: as a period of history; as a historic style; as an abstract recurrent type 200
E. The division of history into periods; epochs in the history of culture and of art 201
F. Defining a historic or period style; general stylistic analysis. The styles of individual artists 203
G. The empirical approach to definitions of historic styles 207
H. The conceptual approach to definitions of historic styles 208
I. Describing a work of art in terms of styles; particular stylistic analysis 211
J. Abstract recurrent types; non-period styles 212

K. Trends in style; the historical sequence of types and styles. Constituent style-trends 213
L. Description of style in quantitative terms; the measurement of art 215
M. Causal problems in the investigation of styles 222
N. Relations between styles; classification and history .. 225

VII. FORM AND VALUE IN THE ARTS: A FUNCTIONAL APPROACH

1. Aesthetic and other functions of the arts 227
2. Works of art as aesthetic stimuli and guides 234
3. The functional analysis of works of art 237
4. The relation of functional analysis to larger problems of evaluation 249
5. Changing functions of the arts in cultural history 252
6. Art, aesthetics, and technology 257

VIII. THE CONCEPT OF BEAUTY IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATURALISM

1. Recent avoidance of the term by scholars 262
2. Can it be improved as a tool of aesthetics and criticism? 264
3. Is there a middle ground between subjectivism and objectivism? 267
4. The nature of aesthetic experience; affects and their external stimuli 272
5. Subjective and objective phases in aesthetic experience 277
6. Corresponding approaches to aesthetics: psychological and sociological; morphological and art-historical; evaluative 281
7. The determinants of aesthetic experience and of its values 284
8. Expressive and critical terms 288
9. A revised set of definitions for "beauty" 289
10. Errors to be avoided in discussing beauty 292
11. Beauty as a standard of value 294
12. Other aesthetic qualities 300

IX. AESTHETICS AND THE ARTIST 302

1. Some obstacles to understanding and co-operation .. 303
2. Different kinds of artist 306
3. Different kinds of aesthetics 314

X. THE PLACE OF AESTHETICS IN THE ART MUSEUM 324

1. The field and organization of an art museum 328
2. The art museum building and equipment 330
3. Exhibiting works of art 331
4. Acquiring works of art 333
5. The interpretation of works of art 338

XI. "THE AFTERNOON OF A FAUN" AND THE INTERRELATION OF THE ARTS 342

INDEX 365

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Debussy: *Themes from Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* 348
2. Debussy: *Theme from Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* 349
3. Manet: *The Faun* 353
4. Manet: *The Nymphs* 353
5. Boucher: *Pan and Syrinx* 354
6. Greek Vase Painting, Late Fifth Century B.C. 355
7. Greek Vase Painting, Sixth Century B.C. 355
8. Nijinsky in *"The Afternoon of a Faun"* 356
9. Bakst: *Costume for a Nymph* 357
10. Bakst: *Costume for the Faun* 357
11. Bakst: *Setting for "The Afternoon of a Faun"* 358

TOWARD SCIENCE IN AESTHETICS

I

SCIENTIFIC METHOD IN AESTHETICS*

CHAPTER I

EXPERIMENTAL AESTHETICS

1. The present situation in aesthetics

In spite of many attempts to turn it into a science, aesthetics is still a branch of speculative philosophy. Among all the branches of philosophy, it is probably the least influential and the least animated, although its subject matter—the arts and the types of experience related to them—is quite the opposite.[1]

The general reason is not hard to find. As usually written about, and taught in colleges, aesthetics is highly abstract and conceptual, having little close contact with the works of art and the experiences of which it speaks. At the same time its discussions lack that sense of cogency, of penetrating deeply into some realm of tested and organized knowledge, which makes many abstract subjects interesting. A person of scientific temper, in reading a book on aesthetics, is apt to be disappointed by its vagueness, its lack of systematic procedure. One interested rather in art, who hopes for some light on its puzzling questions of value, is apt to emerge with the feeling that he is still miles away from the problems he started with, and is not much the wiser for long erudite theorizing over "The Meaning of Beauty," "The Creative Impulse," and "The Function of Art in Life."

Many recent works in aesthetics have come a little nearer to reality in giving up the old quest for absolute laws of beauty, to be proved logically by deduction from metaphysics. The failure of all attempts at such proof, and the spread of the general world view based on natural science, have led modern writers to be skeptical about all alleged absolute standards of value in art. Aesthetics has been com-

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[1] This unfavorable estimate is, fortunately, less true in 1956 than it was in 1928. But much remains to be done.

ing, therefore, to lose its metaphysical character, and to turn into a highly abstract sort of art criticism. A modern textbook on the subject usually makes no claim to finality, but simply recounts a few of the chief conflicting theories and tendencies in the various arts, along with some recent ideas about the psychology of aesthetic experience.

There is much in these theories that is sensible and suggestive, and evidently derived from a sympathetic understanding of art. But there is nothing in current aesthetics resembling a constructive method for future investigation. Each writer summarizes the views of others, adds his own credo to the rest, and the subject is once more at a standstill. There is little suggestion that aesthetics is a subject capable of organized growth or of continuous research along any particular lines. Its old rationalistic methodology is no longer able to function in a world pervaded by philosophies of relativism and evolution, and there is none to take its place.

Yet any proposal to apply the methods of natural science to aesthetics is apt to be met with skepticism and indifference. The reply is sure to be forthcoming that its problems are beyond the reach of scientific investigation: that value in art is largely a subjective affair, and hence not susceptible to objective generalization; that aesthetic feelings are too subtle and indescribable to be analyzed in scientific terminology, too diverse and unpredictable to be formulated in universal laws. If they are to be rationally grasped at all, it can be only through a philosophic imagination which is itself a kind of poetry.

With more positive antagonism, some writers would add that science has gone far enough in reducing our world to laws and classifications, and in providing standardized, mechanical ways of controlling it. If any realm of experience is yet stubbornly mysterious, uncharted, open to ungovernable dreams and impulses, let it remain so as a place of escape from the omnivorous machine. Gray is all theory, and all charms fly at its touch. If science must mechanize and deaden what it penetrates, let us be in no hurry to extend it to the arts, and to the spontaneous enjoyments of life.

These objections are to a large extent justified by the narrow conception of the aims and methods of science entertained by some of its followers. In particular, they are justified by the disappointing

results of all the attempts that have been made at applying scientific method to aesthetics.

At least as long ago as 1876, when the work of Gustav Fechner appeared, there was talk of a science of aesthetics which should proceed by observation and induction, rising to generalizations "from below," instead of working downward by deduction from metaphysics. Since then there have been frequent efforts to investigate aesthetic preference by controlled experiments, usually with numerical treatment of the results.[2] But, as adverse critics never tire of pointing out, the resulting generalizations have been not only dubious but trivial. The whole procedure has never touched the central problems of artistic value, and gives no promise of ever coming into contact with the most important elements in aesthetic experience.

The essential weakness in this "experimental aesthetics," as it has been called, is that it has never been broadly and thoroughly experimental, and hence that it has never been fairly representative of modern scientific method. The performing of set experiments without number is no guarantee of that method, which consists in a habit of mind rather than in any special technique. A genuinely experimental approach to aesthetics as a whole has never been tried, and its possibilities of success or failure, good or evil, are therefore unknown.

2. *The experimental attitude in science*

Scientific method is by no means identical with the use of X rays, color charts, galvanometers or any of the other paraphernalia of particular sciences. It is not identical with absolute logical proof, or the working out of chains of "necessary" inferences, like those of geometry. It is not identical with quantitative measurements. Their utility in most scientific fields is of course undeniable, and the extent to which they are developed is often regarded as the chief criterion of a science's progress. Nevertheless, in dealing with complex and variable phenomena, such as are constantly met with in biology, psychology, and the social sciences, they are often impos-

[2] Cf. G. T. Fechner, *Vorschule der Aesthetik* (Leipzig, 1876); C. Lalo, *L'esthétique expérimentale contemporaine* (Paris, 1908); C. W. Valentine, *The Experimental Psychology of Beauty* (London, 1919).

sible, and investigation must proceed, if at all, in more rough and approximate terms. When erected into a fetish, as they have been by "experimental aesthetics," they usually lead to premature inferences that have a specious air of certainty, and to the neglecting of more fruitful modes of inquiry.

The basic way of thinking that has led to progress in natural science has become a little clearer in the last few years through the study of logical methods in relation to the psychology of reasoning. It consists, essentially, in observing concrete phenomena, comparing them so as to find their resemblances and differences, forming hypotheses to explain their causes and regular recurrences, and testing these hypotheses by more observation of, or experiment with, concrete facts. To some extent, this process occurs whenever we think intelligently about our daily problems. It is not called "scientific," however, except when done with a considerable degree of care and system. To increase its reliability, logicians have worked out formal methods of induction and deduction, which are still being refined along the lines of statistical correlation and symbolic logic.

Even with these guides to accuracy, scientific thinking is constantly endangered by the tendency of human beings to adopt fixed ideas and habits of mind which lead them to ignore or misinterpret actually observable phenomena. This risk cannot be avoided. Every attempt to organize the infinite variety of experience into definite categories entails the necessary omission of certain qualities which seem less significant at the time. But if we keep on ignoring them, ceasing to observe or forcing all new data into preconceived molds, our thinking will grow more and more artificial, false, and useless.

The only remedy for science, in its quest for a faithful and thorough account of nature, is to keep going back to the concrete facts as directly experienced, and to keep trying to see them afresh, with a watchful eye to neglected aspects. Its theories, its definitions of terms, and its special modes of research must then be revised and broadened to fit this broader acquaintance with its subject matter.

Only a method persistently tentative and open-minded deserves the title "experimental," and any attempt to extend scientific method to aesthetics should be made with a constant realization of this fact. Success can never come through a simple transfer of the special procedures and terminology of the older sciences. It is not to be achieved merely by applying a formal logic which has worked

well in geometry, or through special laboratory devices which are suitable to the study of simpler phenomena. No amount of speculation in psychological, physiological, or sociological terms can be more than suggestive when its aim is merely to "reduce" aesthetic phenomena to concepts derived from other fields. Advancing to a more complex and subtle realm of phenomena, the method of science must itself become more flexible, giving rise to new appropriate modes of research and expression. The advance can be made, if at all, only through fresh and extensive observation of aesthetic phenomena, with a persistent effort not to ignore their peculiarities. Previously formed theories will be of service as hypotheses, but must always be regarded with suspicion.

Another implication of an experimental attitude in aesthetics will be a willingness to make the best of the materials at hand, as to both data and hypotheses. Too rigorous an insistence on absolute reliability and "objectivity" of data, too impatient a zeal for universally valid generalizations, may be an obstacle in a field where these cannot be attained at once, if ever. As far as objectivity is concerned, we are gradually learning that no science, even mathematics, can be too sure of itself. Since the seventeenth century, one attack after another has weakened the claim of science to describe the world as it is in itself. Scientists are finally coming to recognize their own human limitations: to admit that all their observing and thinking is done, after all, by organisms with a certain limited structure; that most if not all of their principles contain a large admixture of contingency and useful fiction. Their main effort is devoted now to making generalizations that will work as reliably as possible in predicting and controlling events. "Objectivity" then comes to signify a relative and practical measure of how far a belief has ceased to be merely individual and ephemeral, and has grown to represent the tested experience of humanity. There is no sharp line between "laws" which possess this quality and "theories" which do not, but there is a gradual difference in degree. There is no field of discussion, including aesthetics, in which the reliability of theories cannot be gradually increased through systematic testing and revising in the light of new experience.

It is wise to maintain, on the whole, a fairly rigorous ideal of science, to distinguish it from the many less dependable kinds of thinking that masquerade in its garments. But a too sharp distinction

between what is science and what is not may do more harm than good. It may lead, on one hand, to a too persistent search for exactness where it can not be attained. On the other hand, the only alternative may seem to be a total abandonment of the field to vague speculation and sentiment. The complacent assurance that all science is impossible in aesthetics has provided many a writer with an excuse for careless thinking. Thus aesthetics ignores the opportunity of a middle course in which it could strive for as much systematic control of its observing and thinking as the nature of the phenomena would permit. Demanding positive knowledge or none at all, rejecting all data that are not rigorously objective from the start, it overlooks potentially significant phenomena, and fails to develop the probability of its theories.

3. Observation

Even after two generations of disappointing effort, Fechner's theory that aesthetics should be based on observation still sounds like a reasonable starting point. But the crucial next step is to say what shall be observed, and in what way.

The Fechner tradition in aesthetics, it was noted above, has usually limited itself to observing those features of art and aesthetic experience which can be described with high objective accuracy, such as dimensions and votes of preference. This automatically excludes the facts of greatest concern to artists and critics: the subtle and complex ways in which a work of art affects a sensitive observer.

Suppose, for example, that we go before a painting with a firm resolution to be dispassionate, and to set down only facts which cannot be disputed. We record its dimensions, the number of figures in it, the colors as compared with a standard color chart, the geometrical form of the intersecting straight lines and curves. This, we say, is a description of the picture. But an artist or critic, if he reads it, will probably remark, "You have left out the picture's most important qualities: its gracefulness of line and richness of color." Another may say, "You have left out its most important qualities: its garish colors and crudeness of drawing." Disagreeing widely on what the important qualities are, they will unite in saying that the "scientific" description has left them out.

At this point, the scientist with a rigid conception of objectivity

feels himself in deep and muddy water. These "qualities" of which the critics talk, he will insist, are not really in the picture at all; they are subjective, emotional responses of the critics themselves. They are what Santayana has called the "tertiary qualities" of things: like the "dreariness" of a rainy day, or the "majesty" of an old oak, they have no place in a scientific description of the object. Far from being inherent in the object itself, they are not even "secondary," like redness and warmness, qualities which anyone with ordinary sense organs can experience. They are expressions of feeling and valuation, peculiar to each individual, projected unconsciously upon the picture, and mistakenly believed to be properties inherent in it.

Suppose that we transfer our attention from the picture to the mind of the person who beholds it, and try to observe what goes on there. The prospect is no less discouraging. For the feelings in question are not to be seen by an outside observer; facial expressions and gestures are a poor clue to them. By introspection they may be observed, perhaps, but describing one's own thoughts and feelings is a notoriously unreliable process, and has certainly failed so far to give adequate data for founding a science of aesthetics.

The consensus of present opinion, therefore, would probably be that scientific observation in aesthetics is impossible. A rigorously objective scrutiny of phenomena is possible only on the outer fringe of aesthetic experience, and could not provide the basis for a comprehensive science. Criticism would not qualify as observation, in a strict sense, because it is too subjective, emotional, biased, and unverifiable.

4. Art criticism as an approach to aesthetics

Both of the chief past approaches to general aesthetics have deliberately held themselves aloof from the criticism of art. The Fechner quantitative approach has done so for the reason just mentioned; the metaphysical approach because of its heritage from the philosophy of idealism: a contempt for all material embodiments, and a belief that fundamental problems can be solved only on the plane of abstract ideas, without the need of observing concrete particulars. Both are attempts to explain aesthetic experience with methods and concepts remote from that experience itself: in the one case with those of exact science, in the other with those of metaphysics.

Art criticism, on the other hand, is a process that has arisen spontaneously out of the efforts of past generations to think intelligently about particular works of art; its terms and methods are in much closer touch with practical affairs. Not always, but in many cases, it has been the product of direct and varied contact between works of art and sensitive, discerning minds. It often presents the results of that contact in a confused and perplexing form, with an admixture of questionable elements. But it may nevertheless contain data of possible significance to aesthetics which require only to be selected from their context and properly interpreted.

Granting that its "observations" of works of art are mixed with personal feelings, it should be remembered that these feelings are themselves important to aesthetics. The latter is not interested in works of art "in themselves," or as collections of physical atoms, but in the ways they affect human beings. It is not concerned, as psychology is, with perception and emotion in general, but especially with perception and emotion as related to works of art. Criticism is the nearest approach we have to a recording of particular interactions between works of art and responsive minds.

From this standpoint, all the characteristics of criticism which disqualify it as observation are themselves important as data to be explained. The blending of perception and emotion; of impulse, logic, and dogmatism; the usual lack of systematic method; the clash of standards and the disagreement of critics, are all facts which aesthetics can observe and try to interpret.

As to objectivity, it may at least be possible to distinguish to some extent those elements in criticism which record direct sense perception from those which express emotional responses and value-judgments. For example, when a critic tells us that a picture is red and blue, with a straight line here and a curved line there, he seems to be recording experiences which could be shared by almost anyone with ordinary sense organs. When he tells us that it is unified, rich, graceful, and animated, he seems to be recording more complex responses. What factors in the picture, and what in his own nature and training, have determined these responses?

If other critics disagree, are there any accompanying differences in character and training which suggest an explanation? When a certain standard of value is accepted by one group of critics and

rejected by others, are there environmental or other associated factors that throw light upon the disagreement?

Such an approach to aesthetics would try to work through the process of criticism to something more general [3] and in a sense more objective: to a study of recurrences and variations in human behavior toward works of art. The first task of the aesthetician, then, would be to familiarize himself with art criticism in all its details, noting the specific issues that arise, the conflicting attitudes taken, and the words in which these attitudes are communicated. He could then proceed to look for underlying explanations and more effective ways of settling whatever conflicts can and ought to be settled; for ways of developing and articulating the structure of ideas for which practical criticism had laid the foundation.

5. Its tendencies toward science

As a whole, art criticism has no one constant aim or method. It varies now toward dispassionate analysis of its objects, and now toward becoming an independent structure of thought or fancy in which the critic emphasizes his personal feelings, his virtuosity with words, his power to satirize or glorify, or to entertain with gossip of more or less tenuous relevancy.

As a rule, a critic would feel it tiresome to go into meticulous analysis of a form, or of his responses to it; few readers would follow him. He jumps at once to the critical terms that characterize the whole object *as it affects him:* its "suavity," its "terseness," or its "artificial cleverness." He is sometimes lyrical and sometimes dogmatic, scornful of anyone who does not see the thing at once as he sees it, impatient if asked to back up his epithets with demonstrated reasons. To try to dissociate the object clearly from his feelings and analyze either systematically would require an amount of detachment and of scientific patience which he usually does not possess. To try to justify his verdict with reasoned and general standards of value would require a philosophical breadth which is not common in criticism. Yet he is interested enough in rational explanation not to leave the object entirely and launch upon an independent literary

[3] Compare John Dewey's conception of philosophy as generalized criticism, *Experience and Nature* (Chicago, 1925), Ch. X.

composition of his own. Thus he remains at the parting of many ways, by turns veering toward poetry, toward the analysis of form, toward psychology, and toward ethics, often without realizing the continuous roads that stretch farther in all these directions.

In the present generation of criticism there have been two movements in the direction of greater objectivity of thinking. One of these is toward psychology, and the other toward the analysis of form. They are influenced by outside knowledge, but are growing chiefly out of the materials of art and the language of criticism. The hope of any future science of aesthetics lies to a large extent in carrying them farther, though perhaps not along the exact lines that their present advocates emphasize.

The tendency of criticism toward psychology begins whenever the critic turns his attention from a work of art to wonder about his own feeling or that of others toward it; or about the motivation, character, and methods of the artist who produced it. There have always been sporadic moves along this line of speculation, but it has received a fresh impetus from the modern genetic approach which is being carried into every field of thought. In history, philosophy, and the social sciences especially, the nature of ideas and customs is being explained by tracing their origins in man's physical structure and changing social environment. The approach to art in these terms is at least as old as Spencer, Taine, and Guyau, but it is still in an unsystematic stage. In its widest implications, it means that every work of art and every response of people to it is a problem for genetic explanation. Why is the work of art as it is, and why does a certain person like or dislike it?—the expected answer being in terms of the artist's or critic's personality, the psychic and environmental mechanisms which determined his product or judgment.

The fascinating plausibility of the genetic approach has led to a wave of psychologizing in criticism, a great deal of it based on the special theories of psychoanalysis. It runs to wild lengths in trying to explain every work of art in up-to-date psychological terms, while often forgetting that the specific identity, form, and value of the work may not be thereby explained or appreciated. But if intelligently pursued, it can be infinitely fruitful in explaining the processes of creation and appreciation, and the reasons why things are good or bad. In criticism it has tended on the whole to produce a

more experimental attitude, a realization on the part of critics that they are speaking for themselves and not for the universe.

The tendency toward a study of form has in some cases expressed itself as a direct reaction against the genetic and psychological approaches.[4] It has been coupled with an equally excessive denial that psychology has anything to do with aesthetics, and with a misguided attempt to revive the old absolutistic belief in fixed principles of good art independent of human nature. But in the work of a few critics, the analysis of form has gone along with a sensible use of psychology, and each viewpoint has aided the other.

The constructive work of this movement has been a more discerning and catholic attitude toward the immense variety of ways of organizing the materials of art. In regard to literature, this has meant a decline in reverence for the set patterns and rules of classical rhetoric, with an increasing sensitivity to unconventional methods of composition and to the sensuous effects and subtle suggestiveness of words apart from their definite ideational content. In painting and sculpture, it has been largely coupled with the relations between design and subject matter; with insisting on the importance of perceiving the former directly, as opposed to thinking only of what is represented. The form of a painting, it has urged, is not mere technique, a means to telling a story, but is something worth while in itself—in fact the chief factor in determining the picture's value. This attitude toward painting is clearly expressed in Pater's essay on "The School of Giorgione."[5] In present thought, however, it has been more directly an outcome of the works and ideas of the French impressionist and post-impressionist painters.

Both of these movements in their present state are far from scientific, but they are tendencies in that direction in so far as they stress accurate detailed perception of the actual structure of a work of art, and investigation of its peculiar psychological causes and effects. They are movements away from the naïve and mystic stages in which tertiary qualities are experienced only as immediate, unexplained, and unanalyzed wholes, and toward a stage where such qualities are traced to their various co-operating causes in the object and in the personality of the beholder. Whether such a tendency is

[4] See the critical writings of Paul Valéry, T. S. Eliot, and Wyndham Lewis.

[5] *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (London, 1873).

on the whole for better or for worse, whether or not it makes for greater enjoyment or appreciation, is a question we need not raise at present. We are not assuming that all criticism should become more scientific, but are asking how it can become so if and when one's aim is the acquirement of generalized knowledge.

6. "Experimental aesthetics" broadly conceived

As applied to the method of Fechner and his followers, the name "experimental aesthetics" is a misnomer, for that method is too narrow and rigid to merit the name. Broadly conceived, an experimental attitude in aesthetics would imply making use of all possible clues to the nature of aesthetic experience, from a variety of sources and modes of investigation. It would imply putting all these clues together, and on that basis working toward tentative generalizations through induction and the testing of hypotheses.

As to observation, it would imply an active collection of all sorts of data which seemed fairly relevant, choosing of course the most promising and the most reliable, but at first erring on the side of indiscriminateness rather than of exclusiveness. Many past approaches to aesthetics have been sidetracked by a too narrow definition of the subject at the start, and by rigid preconceptions as to its proper aims and methods. With a mass of material brought together, one can begin eliminating the least relevant and trustworthy; but facts which at first seem irrelevant often turn out to be clues to some yet unsuspected reality, other than the one being sought.

In the following chapters, several different sources of data for aesthetics will be discussed, among them educational and psychological experiment, art history, and certain aspects of the use of words.

The outstanding need, however, is for much direct study of concrete works of art in relation to aesthetic problems; for criticism which shall be co-ordinated by a general comparative interest, but specific in its reference to particular objects and their effects on the beholder. There is need for many records of fresh aesthetic experiences by observers of different types, expressed as clearly as possible under the circumstances, but with no rigorous effort at the start to distinguish subjective elements from objective, personal peculiarities from universally demonstrable facts.

There is no obstacle but the inertia of tradition to prevent aes-

thetics from undertaking an extensive program of direct comparative observation of particular examples from various arts, with the aim of discovering common and divergent qualities of form. This would imply a breaking down of the arbitrary distinction between aesthetics and art criticism. It would imply an effort to make all general theories grow directly out of detailed analyses of works of art instead of being merely illustrated with occasional examples, as in most past and present writing on aesthetics.

Study of the sort proposed would differ considerably from the usual present work of art critics, historical researchers, and students of art appreciation. In the first place, a surprising amount of this work is done at second hand, through textbooks, abbreviated summaries, photographs, and lantern slides, and cannot be classed as direct experience of works of art. In the second place, the study of the arts is now a highly specialized, compartmental affair. In colleges and art academies, in books and journalistic comment, music is taken up by itself, painting by itself, and literature by itself. Even literature is customarily divided on the basis of languages, and too little effort is given to comparison between the divisions. Aesthetics is a separate subject, as are psychology and scientific method. Few critics or historians of the arts are familiar with these subjects in addition to their own material. As a natural consequence of this specialization, the study of each art is pursued without much comparison with the other arts, and with little reference to the requirements of logical thinking or to the psychological aspects of aesthetic value. By contrast, the proposed type of study would be not only direct and extensive, but co-ordinated in all its parts toward the developing of generalizations about aesthetic forms and experiences.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance to aesthetics of direct, spontaneous, and not too narrowly controlled experience of works of art. But modern science teaches also the value of hypothesis in suggesting new fruitful ways of investigating and organizing data. Although it is wise to regard all past theories of aesthetics with some suspicion, it is equally wise to utilize them as suggestions.

The fact that classical theories may have been based on false metaphysical assumptions, or otherwise supported with unconvincing arguments, does not mean that they are entirely false. Much wisdom and much direct criticism of art and other values of life have gone into them. From a few cases or a single case, a penetrating

mind can leap to generalizations more profoundly true than those a plodding one could infer from countless instances. Almost in spite of themselves, the classical idealists derived from contact with the physical world a notion of perennially vital questions and possible answers, unconsciously twisting their logic to suit. Their systems, therefore, may be rich in problems and hypotheses for science, while their method of reasoning is powerless to separate the true from the false, or to deal with contemporary situations.

Since the field of aesthetics is yet uncharted by science, the thinking of great modern philosophers and critics within it may have at best the same sort of value as that of the early Greek philosophers. They were critics of all experience, divining within it, along with figments of their own imagination, real atomic and logical forms whose outlines modern science has still to clarify. Like them, the modern critic may be intuitive, clairvoyant—in no supernatural sense, but as a revealer of subtle relations and values, a prophet and guide to future science. A hint from such a thinker—for example, Pater's dictum that "All art constantly aspires toward the condition of music"—if not the whole truth, may be invaluable as a hypothesis to a student of the history of form.

An important task of experimental aesthetics is to utilize past speculative theories as suggestions to be tested and developed. Much that is obsolete, false, and irrelevant will be found in them, along with much that can be made to stand on its own feet in modern terminology. For example, Plato's theory of the effects of certain kinds of music on the will and character can be considered quite apart from its philosophical context. Aristotle's theory of tragedy as a purging of the emotions may not apply to all kinds of tragedy, or to all ways of experiencing them; but it deserves reconsideration from a modern viewpoint (in relation to psychoanalysis, for example) and testing to find out its value as an explanatory principle today.

As to the meaning of testing or verification, we need again a more flexible conception than obtains in the exact sciences. We cannot hope to prove aesthetic theories definitely true or false by recourse to concrete instances; but there is a middle course between that and pure dialectic. One can, in a broad sense, test a given theory in practice by going directly to a variety of relevant objects of art with that one theory uppermost in mind, and by noting the extent to

which that theory is borne out by one's own experience of the objects. The aesthetician has not finished his task of observation when he has looked a few times at a given work of art with an open mind; he should return again and again to see it in the light of various possible theories, and to compare it with such other objects as each theory suggests.

In the absence of some such directing idea, one's attention to a work of art is apt to be distributed over a multitude of details, with the result that no particular linking up of facts with theories is made. As to recalling the object and discussing it later, most people overestimate their ability to remember accurately. The memory-image soon becomes faint and blurred, colored by other memories, and very susceptible to outward suggestions. There is no substitute for the immediate squaring up of a particular belief with the particular facts it is supposed to cover, and in the absence of such contact aesthetic discussion is likely to remain "up in the air."

The chief difficulty in testing classical aesthetic ideas, it will be found, is their extreme generality and consequent vagueness. "The ugly," "the sublime," "the harmonious"—what energy has been spent in trying to give these traditional categories permanent definitions and to decide whether a certain case belongs under one label or another! By shuffling about these concepts and a few docile examples, more than one theorist has produced a system that looked both new and illuminating as long as it was kept safely between the covers of a book. The traditional dogma that "Aesthetic theory is a branch of philosophy, and exists for the sake of knowledge and not as a guide to practice" [6] has saved many lofty doctrines the shock of having their emptiness revealed. Without being tried as a guide to practice, no theory can be made reliable and genuinely explanatory.

For this reason, along with others to be noted, the experimenter is likely to find that the less general concepts of art criticism are often more illuminating, as guides and explanations in actual experience, than the broad and "fundamental" ones of classical aesthetics. The principal difference is that aesthetics usually speaks in glittering generalities, while criticism tends to apply its concepts to some particular work of art, or at most to the works of some particular artist, school, or period. The aim of the latter is to characterize

[6] B. Bosanquet, *A History of Aesthetic* (London, 1917), Preface.

or appraise some specific subject matter, and its terms, while general enough to be frequently applied, are consequently more specific also. Where the aesthetician defines "beauty" and "creativeness" in the abstract, the critic states that a certain piece of music is a "weak imitation of Brahms"; that a certain statue is "unbalanced and overdecorated on the surface"; that a certain poem is "witty, urbane and epigrammatic"; that a certain painter or school excels in "rich, glowing atmospheres, full of sunlight and brilliant coloring." Such judgments may be to a large extent subjective and debatable; but they are also fairly specific and intelligible. One can go to the work of art mentioned and face a fairly definite issue as to whether the terms applied seem to be just, whether some other terms would be more so, and whether the present terms would be more suitable to some other example. In so doing, one is treating each of these ideas as a hypothesis in one's own experience.

The next step is to compare the results with those of other critics. An essential phase of all experimental science is that of comparing notes—a mutual checking up of findings between workers in the same field. It is a process that has never been systematically developed in aesthetics, but it is quite within the scope of possibility. The details of this and other phases in experimental aesthetics will be considered in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II

THE ANALYSIS OF FORM

1. A descriptive attitude in criticism

The movement toward a descriptive study of form begins whenever a critic makes an effort to perceive a work of art clearly and as a whole: to explain his feelings toward it by tracing them to specific observable details in the object.

Such an attitude is intermediate between two extremes. One, that of casual enjoyment or hasty criticism, tends to notice only a few details, or the whole thing in a vague and blurred manner—to sense rather than to perceive it; then to feel an immediate affective response, such as liking or disliking, which may find expression in

broad evaluative terms like "beautiful" or "ugly." There the matter rests; the judgment expressed is final; attention wanders or remains fragmentary and superficial.

The other extreme is an attempt at a rigorously objective account of the work of art, as a zoologist might describe a butterfly, excluding all affective terms, putting down only what any observer with normal sense organs (and perhaps a microscope) could observe. A critical analysis of a work of art would include, in addition, affective responses and perhaps associated imagery, but with a persistent effort to relate them to perceptible features in the object.

As we have also noted, it is a common human trait to think and speak as if such effects on the beholder were properties inherent in the object which stimulated them. The critic should not be overanxious to express all his experience in terms of his own responses, in the hope of being more scientific. Even a zoologist says that the butterfly is yellow, and not that he has a sensation of yellowness when he looks at it. Likewise the critic naturally says of a picture, not that he feels a response of empathy toward it, but that its lines are rhythmic and swirling, and move toward a certain point. To try to translate aesthetics entirely into psychology would be cumbersome and impractical. In the first place, no adequately specific psychological terms exist. In the second, we should tend to falsify a distinctive characteristic of aesthetic experience: that it occurs largely *as a projection on* the work of art, as a feeling that certain qualities are *in* the work of art. If the critic were to transfer his attention too much to his own responses, most of them would immediately cease to operate; self-consciousness would stifle them. Another reason is that the structure of the work of art is one of the two main determinants (along with individual personality) of the nature of the response.

It is therefore necessary for aesthetics to observe and describe the various forms of art, not entirely apart from human responses to them, but in their own right as distinctive stimuli. The experimental way to do this is to take as starting points the affects or "tertiary qualities," roughly distinguished by critical terms; then to work gradually toward a more distinct recognition of those factors in the stimulus which helped to determine them.

In a sense we cannot analyze any aesthetic quality in a work of art, or any other perceptive or affective quality as such. It is present

in experience as an irreducible whole, and is different from the sum of any number of psychic elements into which we could try to analyze it. But it does not follow, as some critics have argued, that all analysis of aesthetic form is impossible. In distinguishing the various factors that go to make up a work of art, we are not analyzing the affect itself, but the complex stimulus which produced it. We are thus working toward a partial explanation of it by discovering some of its causal antecedents.

There are two necessary phases in this type of criticism. One is the effort toward clearer perception of form; the other is the effort to express its results in words that will indicate them to others. These phases can proceed hand in hand, each assisting the other.

2. Organic perception of a complex form

This phase of criticism requires keeping one's attention fixed with some steadiness on a particular work of art, and trying to grasp its chief elements in their interrelations. It is not a passive, dreamy contemplation, or a listing of miscellaneous features, one after the other, but an active, selective scrutiny and co-ordination of details. It involves alternating an analytic with a synthetic attitude: first to dissociate a vaguely sensed complex into its parts, then to reassemble these parts into an organic whole.

The word "form" is often used in one of several narrow senses. In the broad sense intended here, it is any distinctive way of organizing the materials in a work of art. It is not a detachable framework, but (in Pater's words) the distinctive "mode of handling" the subject and materials. In music or poetry, one has not grasped the form in merely identifying a conventional pattern, such as the sonnet or fugue. There is all the difference in the world between sonnets, and to describe the form of one is to recognize and state the distinctive characteristics, of whatever sort, that make it different from all others. If a fugue makes use of peasant folk tunes for its melodies, then to describe it one must recognize not only that fact, but the peculiar mode of handling them, the ways in which they are woven together, varied in rhythm and key, and enriched with harmony. In painting and sculpture, the word "form" is sometimes limited to the linear pattern or to the shapes of masses; but the broader conception would take in also the lines, lights and shadows, colors,

spaces, even representative and expressive effects—in so far as they are made to co-operate harmoniously toward producing a single cumulative effect on the beholder.

For the sake of clear perception, however, it is necessary to distinguish to some extent certain main groups of elements in such a total form. These are the sensuous materials (e.g., tones, colors, lines, masses, word sounds, considered as individual units); the same materials as co-operating factors in a design (e.g., a sonnet, façade, or sonata); and the natural objects represented, the ideas or emotions expressed (e.g., trees, houses, and sunlight in a landscape; religious, moral, or dramatic interest, a gay or tragic mood).[1] For a beginner in art appreciation this is especially important, since his usual tendency is to overemphasize representative and expressive effects. At first it is well for him to practice ignoring these effects, and attending only to the others. With a picture, for example, one can stand at a distance, or at an acute angle with the plane of the canvas, or perhaps turn the picture upside down—anything to grasp the effect of the colors, lines, and masses in themselves, without regard to what natural objects they stand for. Afterward, he can return to perceive both elements in their mutual relations. Some critics would have him ignore subject matter forever; but this is an extreme and unnecessary attitude taken by few artists, and destructive of many important values.

The separation between these various groups of elements can never be sharp if the work of art is a thoroughly organized one; but emphasis can vary from one to the other, both in the work itself and in the beholder's mode of perceiving it. In literature, especially prose, the importance of direct sense perception may be relatively slight. Even the sound of the words, heard or imagined, may in some cases not count for much. The form must then be sought chiefly in the way the expressive materials are organized; the way various associated ideas and images are called up in order—certain beliefs and desires conflicting, events moving toward a climax, or merely dragging along in a slow monotony that itself gives a definite cumu-

[1] For fuller discussions of form in various arts, see G. Santayana, *The Sense of Beauty* (New York, 1896) and *Reason in Art* (New York, 1922); B. Bosanquet, *Three Lectures on Aesthetics* (London, 1915); A. C. Barnes, *The Art in Painting* (Merion, Pa., 1925); De Witt H. Parker, *The Analysis of Art* (New Haven, Conn., 1926).

lative effect. A common-sense attitude in such cases is not to try ignoring the expressive elements entirely, but simply to keep from wandering far into trains of private association. One can try to grasp whatever associated thoughts and images the artist seems to have intended, without drifting into remoter day-dreams, or into questions of general theory and valuation.

If there seems to be a definite pattern the observer should seek to analyze it by singling out conspicuous recurrences of a theme. He should be on the watch for any distinctive melody, color, shape, phrase, character-motive, or idea which returns with recognizable similarity. He should note when or where it recurs, with what minor variations, and in what new contexts. If there are, as usual, two or more strongly contrasting themes, he should note how they are juxtaposed to accentuate their contrast, and how at times, perhaps, they are bridged by an intermediate or composite section. Then he should look to see how they are woven together, as by opposition, balance, and the subordination of minor to dominating elements.

But frequently no such clearly marked pattern will be found. The only organizing principle in the work may be some pervasive, subtle, but characteristic atmosphere. In impressionist painting, this may be only some peculiar iridescence of light and color; in literature, some intangible mood; in music, what is vaguely called "tone coloring" or "atmosphere." A descriptive attitude in criticism will emphasize the task of stating clearly what the facts are in a given case, before trying to appraise their value.

In every art, there is a much greater variety of actual aims, interests, and effects than persons unacquainted with it are apt to expect. Knowing only one kind, a person develops fixed habits of perception as well as of preference: he tends to look at all works of art in the way that kind requires, expecting them to produce a similar effect. One expects all sculpture to represent a physically beautiful body; all novels to have a definite plot. Coming in contact with a work that has a different aim, one tries to interpret it in the usual way; and the result is only uncomfortable perplexity, a sense of distortion and confusion, which one attributes to the work of art itself. One misses the positive effects the artist intended and is conscious only of the failure to find something else.

This is especially likely to happen in coming for the first time upon a primitive, exotic, or unconventionally modern work. In a

statue which aims for rhythmic repetition of planes and masses, one sees only their failure to fall into correct anatomical positions.[2] In a poem of irregular rhythm one is conscious only of its failure to fall into the expected regular beats. The only way to develop flexible and sensitive powers of perception is to keep subjecting oneself to a great variety of unfamiliar forms; to make plasticity and open-mindedness themselves habitual. The most highly trained connoisseur is sure to lose this plasticity if he confines himself entirely to one special field.

Perception, like reasoning, can be experimental. Attention can be kept alert but varied in direction; not too rigidly fixed on one aspect or theme, but turned here and there as one would look in a foggy street for outstanding features that may give a clue to the rest. A good order, on the whole, is to experience the object first in a general, unselective way, without looking for anything in particular or trying to recall what anyone has said about it. If it is a picture, stand off at a distance, so that details are merged; if a poem or piece of music, read or hear it first with no definite purpose, merely to let its total effect "sink in" as much as it will in an easy and natural way. Then come back to it later on, to pick out its main constituent parts, its chief themes and distinctive qualities, noticing each of these as a whole without too much attention to subordinate details. Then each of these wholes—say a certain melody composed of several phrases; the complex motives of a single character in a play; the drapery on one painted figure—can be analyzed in turn into its elements. There is a dangerous tendency in perception to let one's attention be caught by some one familiar or conspicuous detail, and thus to miss the larger structure into which it fits. Finally, or at repeated intervals if the task is hard, one should take a general view as at first, but more synthetically, working always toward a more organic perception instead of the first blurred and superficial one.

It is a familiar fact that some objects are more easily perceived as wholes than others. A page containing only a circle, for example, is easier to grasp as a whole than one full of irregular figures; a popular song, than a symphony. Wherever a part is continued or repeated with recognizable similarity, it tends to make the whole form easier to keep track of at once. But it may also tend to become monoto-

[2] Cf. P. Guillaume and T. Munro, *Primitive Negro Sculpture* (New York, 1926).

nous, like the ticking of a clock; we become anaesthetic toward it, or, if it is forced on our attention, it becomes irritating. In some phases of art, such as architectural ornament, the artist does not care to make us conscious of separate details, and so repeats them with extreme uniformity. In others, he tries to keep our interest stimulated with frequent surprises, and so repeats a theme with minor variations and irregularities. In still others, he wishes to startle and excite us with sudden shocks: a *sforzando* or an unprepared change of key; the entrance of a radically different melody, color, or shape; a quite unexpected turn of events in fiction. In a broad sense, these are examples of disunity; they are breaks in the smooth flow of parts, and in that sense no work of art is a perfect unity. But even these contrasts can be to some extent woven together, reintegrated as parts in a comprehensive scheme. The surprising incident is shown to be one that might logically have happened under the conditions; we hear the first melody again with a sense of familiar recognition, as of coming home after an adventure.

Works of art differ widely as to the extent to which they introduce these sudden breaks, and also as to the extent to which they try to link them up again. The observer should ask himself, then, whether any gaps and shocks that he feels are due to his own failure to perceive the relations which the artist has indicated, whether they are intended by the artist as parts of a total plan, or whether they are unintended faults in the machinery of the work of art itself. Conversely, he should ask if he is noticing all the discontinuities that actually exist in it, and be on the lookout for those of both kinds, the intended and the unintended.

Often after repeated failures, the *raison d'être* of some apparently wrong detail will suddenly flash over one: the distorted tabletop in a Cézanne still life comes into relation with a folded tablecloth in another corner of the picture, as a repetition of line and mass. The larger order into which everything fits has been there all the time, but one has been overlooking some detail that completed the circuit. For this reason it is best not to push perceptive effort to the point of fatigue at any one time, but to come back another day with a fresh viewpoint. Unconsciously, one's nervous mechanism may have kept on organizing the images in the meantime. In the same way a form that seemed solid enough at first glance will disclose weak spots, glaring discrepancies, limping, illogical transitions that were

superficially glossed over, as in a thrilling mystery play whose solution one thinks about on the way home.

A form may be made complex, not only by multiplying themes and variations, but by bringing more radically different factors into play. Thus a line drawing may be made more intricate as such, or may be complicated by the addition of light and shade and color. A melody for violin alone may be made into an intricate arabesque, or it may be kept simple and a complex form be built up by adding other voices, each pursuing its own pattern simultaneously. Thus a musical composition may involve co-ordinating melody, harmony, rhythm, counterpoint, and orchestration. In opera, the sense and sound of words, the action, costumes, scenery, and lighting effects are additional factors to be co-ordinated.

The observer's task at any given moment—say the elevation of the Grail in *Parsifal*—is to ask himself what total synthetic effect on the beholder is intended; and how each factor operating at the moment contributes its share—how each previous moment has contributed by leading up to it. He may find that a particular factor is weak: the singing, or the lighting; or that one obtrudes itself on the attention —an overloud orchestra, perhaps; or that the action calls for a mood which the music tends to counteract. In a well-organized work, one is apt to find it harder to think of the factors separately; but comparing the work with others less unified, or imagining how the present one could be changed a little in each factor, will help to reveal the part each is playing in the whole.

3. Tentative criticism

One's first experience of a work of art, superficial as it may be, usually includes an immediate feeling over and above mere perception. This may be a positive liking or disliking, an intense emotion, a definite critical judgment, or it may be only mild interest or boredom. To express that feeling in words is not at all a necessary part of aesthetic experience. To persons of a certain temperament, anything more than the proverbial "Hm!" is an annoying distraction. But to others it is a natural and continuous part of appreciation, and it is a necessary phase of both criticism and aesthetics.

Inadequate as any words are apt to seem, a little effort to find the right ones is often an aid to clear distinction, for oneself as well as

for others, of the specific qualities felt. But it is dangerous to try for exact words too quickly; the attempt will distort and stifle other sorts of response. It is best to have the full experience first and then speak or write about it; not a long time afterwards, when it has become a little hazy, but as soon as the response has taken shape, and can lead naturally to expression.

Neither the feeling, nor the finding of words to describe it, is a matter that can be entirely controlled by reason. Both are largely automatic processes of apperception and association, in which the sensory responses start further reverberations through the organism, setting in motion some of the waiting machinery of habit and memory, of innate and acquired predispositions to respond in a certain complex way to a stimulus of that type. The finding of suitable words is a part of this associative process. If in the past certain words have been used or heard in more or less similar situations, they tend now to come to mind as an immediate result of that felt similarity. In proportion as one has become familiar with works of art like the one at hand, forming certain habitual attitudes toward them, and learning to express these attitudes in words, the process will now be quicker and easier, less groping and uncertain.

The chief danger attending it is, as usual, one of habit-fixation. There will be a tendency to pigeonhole the new object at once after glimpsing some few conspicuous features of it; to respond in feelings and words as one usually does to objects having those few features. So standardized, criticism becomes hackneyed and perfunctory. It speaks in clichés, like the term "whimsical" in regard to anything by Barrie. An experimental attitude here would involve a suspension of final judgment, but not necessarily any sense of restraint that would weaken the first spontaneous response. Strong and positive as that response may be, it can be followed up with further investigation.

In exactly the same way, a comment about the present object by some other critic can be followed up as a hypothesis. In going to a play after reading a newspaper criticism of it, this would imply listening for particular lines and incidents in the play which support or contradict that criticism. To work still further toward definite verification would be to read the play later, select these evidential details, and trace their exact bearing on the hypothesis in question. Any general critical or evaluative term suggested will be linked if

possible with demonstrable elements; with actual lines or spots of color that one could point to in a painting; to notes that one could point to in a musical score. If the quality alleged is something more pervasive, that cannot be traced to a few definite points, it may at least be possible to find places where it is especially manifest, or bits scattered through the whole which exert a cumulative effect. In a picture there may be a slight but constant tendency to elongate every object; in a piece of music, to reiterate augmented fourths, briefly and quietly in some inner voice, so that little by little they make themselves felt as a troubled undercurrent.

Still one may have to describe them in emotional terms, such as "troubled." But one is working always toward more distinct recognition of the factors which are contributing most powerfully to that particular emotional effect. Emotions and their causes in the form are recognized and characterized ever more specifically. Things are no longer merely "nice," "unpleasant," or "interesting," as at first. They are "sparkling," "ponderous," "lilting," "harsh," "crisp," "dainty," "melting," "rich," or "barren." More and more of such words come to mind as one contemplates different parts of the object. One has distinguished separate themes and factors and can describe each separately, and the relation of each to others. One melody is wild and tormented; another, grave and sedate, answers and finally dominates it. Bit by bit such comments will grow into a description approximating in organic structure the work of art itself; yet also, in a sense, a narrative or autobiography of one's adventure with it. The account will still be of how one individual sees and feels it, but more and more it will become an account of this particular object as distinct from all others.

In the process, the critic is quite likely to have to alter the snap judgment he began with. What seemed at first confused is now orderly; what seemed ugly and horrible is merely odd, bizarre, and fantastic. He may never come, especially if the work is complex and many-sided, to any way of perceiving or describing it that satisfies him as complete. In each contact with it he will discover new details and relations, and his description of its form will grow with his growing powers of perception. But on some points he will find his first impressions confirmed and traced to definite causes which are there for all the world to see. He will know, now, that his quick feeling of a picture's weakness and confusion was due to the fact that

certain objects in it do not take definite positions in space, but appear at the same distance from the eye as other objects which overlap them. He will have traced his feeling of vague disappointment at a story's ending to the realization that a certain conflict was left undecided, or settled in a hasty, arbitrary way.

4. Comparison of forms and of media

To describe anything we must, consciously or not, compare it with others. Making this comparison direct, specific, and systematic is the best way to recognize the distinctive qualities of each work of art. Otherwise our description of each is apt to be promiscuous and unenlightening; for there is an infinite number of things to be said about any one. A significant account will emphasize the few qualities that differentiate it from all others, while at the same time orienting it with reference to the general type or types to which it belongs.

It is hard to compare many objects at a time, and the wisest course is to take two or three at once, then two or three more. Museum-goers usually make the mistake of looking at too many things in a single trip, with the result that they become confused and fatigued, and remember nothing in particular. For the description of form, it is a good plan to pick out two works in the same medium, and begin by noting obvious general similarities and contrasts between them. Of two landscapes one has brighter colors, the other sharper outlines, and so on. Item by item, one will work out a fuller account of what each has to offer that the other does not. As more and more objects are thus compared, one becomes practiced in going quickly to the essential features, the unique contribution of each. As data for aesthetic generalization, it is desirable that accounts of each object should not be too profuse, but come to the point concisely.

As mentioned in the first chapter, there is great need in aesthetics for comparison of examples from different media and different arts, as opposed to the present overspecialized study. Only by this means can sound generalizations be worked out as to common tendencies in all the arts, the peculiarities of each, and such interrelations as the far-reaching spread of the Romantic movement. This phase of aesthetic theory has suffered like the rest from much dogmatic assertion about the "proper aims and the limits" of the various arts, as if these could be decided in advance. The growth of art is a

constant breaking down of limits and finding of new aims, and the present need of aesthetics is for more exact information on what actual common and divergent tendencies have occurred up to date.

A useful line of investigation is to compare what has been done in one medium with what has been done in another: painting in water color, say, with painting in oils; both with stained glass windows. One will notice certain common forms and influences from one to the other, such as the imitation of Renaissance painting by workers in stained glass, tapestry, and mosaic. By comparing the rendition of similar forms in these different media, one can inquire which medium is the most effective as a means to a certain end. If the aim is a flat pattern of great brilliance and luminosity without much representative realism, the stained glass will perhaps appear to have the best of it. When one tries to model in the round, suggest deep space and natural tints, stained glass will on the whole be less successful than oil painting. Likewise in music, violins will be more easily adaptable to flowing, continuous tones, percussion instruments to a decisive staccato.

It is frequently stated as a positive aesthetic rule that the artist should "exploit the potentialities of his medium," "harmonize medium with design," and so on. This is an extremely suggestive lead to follow up in comparative analysis. It may give important clues to the reason for a general effect of weakness and disunity, or of perfect harmony and strength. One can try, for example, to imagine how well a certain form could be transposed to another medium: as from verse to prose, or from piano to string quartet. In some Egyptian statues, the designs are as solid and rigid as the stone of which they are made, by contrast with the late Greek, which seem to be trying to defy these properties of stone and turn into soft, warm animation.

The danger lies in jumping from such descriptive hypotheses to rules and general valuations. It by no means follows that an artist should limit himself to those types of form for which his medium has in the past seemed most suitable. We can discover the potentialities of a medium only by experimenting with it, not *a priori*. And a work of art may appeal on other grounds in spite of a certain struggle with its medium—perhaps even because of it, as in the sculpture of Rodin. Perfect harmony is not the only possible aim in art, as the rebels of each generation have to demonstrate anew to its worshipers.

Comparative study has another use—that of suggesting terms to be used in description. The best way to convey the idea of any direct experience is often to liken it to some more familiar one. For describing an odor, there are certain general terms such as "fragrant," "acrid," "pungent." But to characterize one specifically, we usually say that it is like some better-known odor: aconite, for example, is said to have the smell of bitter almonds. If it were not exactly like any other, we might say that it was "somewhere between" two specified perfumes. Likewise, the most vivid way to describe a certain painted shadow may be to call it "Rembrandt-like"; to describe a general musical atmosphere may be to say that it is "somewhere between Strauss and Debussy." A common term like "simplicity" is apt to be too vague to characterize clearly. Yet very different kinds of simplicity are suggested by the words "Egyptian," "Mozartian," and "Wordsworthian." Of course, the critic should be prepared to follow up such an analogy with specifications, but even alone they are a start toward orienting the form and the experience it causes in relation to others.

5. Types and styles of form

Through centuries of comparison, mostly casual and unsystematic, the subject of art criticism has developed ideas of countless different types or recurrent qualities of form: "the grotesque," for example. Insofar as a person has had direct experience of art, such terms will not remain for him mere verbal abstractions, but will be names for composite images built up automatically through the memory of many concrete works of art. Then if the word "grotesque" is mentioned, it will tend to call up before his mind's eye a vague composite of many gargoyles, dwarfs in literature, or other things with which he has coupled the word. At will, he can clarify this image into one definite example after another.

Such conceptions, referred to by name and significant to those who read them, occur by the thousand in literature and in criticism. Books on general aesthetic theory usually mention a half-dozen or so, calling them "*the* aesthetic types" as if the list were thereby exhausted. They go on to define them in an abstract and *a priori* manner, and perhaps to mention and explain a few illustrations of each.

The types thus included are only the most broad and comprehensive, such as the beautiful, ugly, sublime, comic, tragic, witty, satiric, charming, and pathetic. The usual implication is that all the others can be reduced to or classified under these, so that aesthetics need take account of no more. Persons who have had much to do with concrete works of art, however, often feel that such classification is rather unsatisfactory and does not help them much in organizing the great variety of their experiences. They sometimes jump to the other extreme and say that no general classification of art forms is possible, each being unique in itself. The names of conventional patterns in the various arts (the epic, lyric, novel, symphony, and so on) are likewise limited in utility, since they give only the shell and not the spirit of organization, and since new forms are constantly arising (like the symphonic poem and modern novel) which cannot be classified under the old definitions.

The fact that art criticism can express itself at all in general terms, and be fairly well understood, is evidence that aesthetic forms and experiences can be approximately grouped under headings. But the present gulf between criticism and aesthetics is also evidence that the latter needs to take a different attitude toward the question of types. It should, in the first place, build up its types by a more inductive and experimental method. It should recognize and study many more different types than it does, and be in no hurry to set exact limits to each or arrange them in formal hierarchies.

Any term frequently used in criticism to characterize a work of art: any adjective like "weird," "turgid," "bombastic," "urbane," "precious," or "flamboyant"; any noun like "decadence" or "sentimentality," any phrase like "the grand manner" should be considered as an aesthetic type, as a category for organizing aesthetic data. It should be studied more or less distinctly as a tool of thought, and its connotation and denotation clarified through use in descriptive criticism.

Such terms are usually applied in more than one art. To trace their concrete applications would be an excellent way to pursue the subject of comparative aesthetics: that is, to look for common and divergent tendencies among all the arts.

A type may be symbolized also by the name of some well-known particular work of art, or some part or character in one. We fre-

quently hear of the "Mona Lisa type" or of the "Venus de Milo type," as a way of describing a real or represented person. The analogy is not always based on a mere physical likeness: it may be the possession of a more subtle, complex quality or sentiment in common. For example, we speak of a "Hamlet-like" character; the "Faustian spirit." We may speak of the *"Liebestod"* theme in any situation of art or life where intense tragic passion is involved, and where life seems well lost for love.

The symbol may be the name of a particular artist: the Byronic, the Miltonic, the Chopinesque, the Raphaelesque. Even music can be called "Homeric" if it is simple, majestic, animated, and powerful. To use such a term of course involves the selection and composite image of some quality thought to pervade and distinguish the works of that man. Likewise, we may generalize on the style of some school of art, some nationality or epoch taken as a whole. This again involves a selective merging of the works of many artists into a larger composite. Vague as it may be, it is often significant. To someone who knows the paintings of Carpaccio, Giorgione, Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese, it is enlightening to say that a certain novel has a Venetian richness and splendor, even though the story has nothing to do with Venice.

All such comparison through composite images runs the risk of being based on incomplete perception and dubious generalization. What, for example, is the Raphaelesque? To one it suggests a divine perfection of beauty; to another a rather brittle, sentimental prettiness. The term cannot be satisfactorily defined through abstract argument, but it can perhaps be clarified a little through more careful analysis of Raphael's paintings and comparing them with others. We are apt in such broad concepts to ignore negative instances and oversimplify the facts. Words like "classic" and "romantic" cover so many diverse forms that they are apt to be more misleading than helpful in criticism. As we realize these diversities more and more, the only course is to abandon the word, or go on looking for some pre-eminent and pervasive distinction to which it can still be attached. Often it is necessary to split up the concept into two or three divisions. So we distinguish the *"Sturm und Drang"* Goethe from the Olympian one; archaic Greek sculpture from Phidian and late, whereas a less exact person speaks of Greek sculpture as if it were all the same. To sharpen our critical vocabu-

lary we need constant intensive study of each of these concepts to link it more carefully with concrete examples, and to translate it into other terms which, taken together, seem to be an approximate equivalent for it.[3]

6. Redefinition of terms

A constant obstacle to clarity of discussion is the ambiguity of words. The human stock of ideas grows faster than language to convey them, and old names are constantly being attached to new ideas, sometimes with accompanying words to show the difference, but often without. The history of any word long used in theoretical writing will show its association with many different objects, qualities, and beliefs, and in present usage it will tend to carry with it vague hints of these past associations. Different persons will use the word with intent to convey different ideas, and discussion will be at cross-purposes. An argument over whether a certain picture is "beautiful" or "ugly" is apt to end in confusion because of the ambiguity of these words, aside from whatever underlying differences of feeling and opinion exist. Two persons may agree that it is "ugly," while one understands the word to mean "repellent, lacking in all aesthetic appeal"; the other understands it to mean simply "distorted, grotesque," like some Chinese carvings which are not at all unpleasant. Or they may disagree on the application of a certain term for the same reason, while their feelings toward the object are in accord.

Dictionaries, learned societies, and writers whose authority is respected can help in the matter by deciding on certain definitions, but much ambiguity is often left over in spite of all they can do. A persistent obstacle to progress is the attitude which many persons take toward definition. They assume that there is some one right meaning for every word, by the nature of things, and that a definition cannot be "true" which gives any other. They become emotionally attached to a certain word-meaning relation, and if anyone proposes another, they suppose that he is necessarily disputing their basic beliefs. There is a long philosophical tradition behind this attitude, and it can even be traced to primitive "word-magic," which

[3] See, for example, W. Worringer's suggestive analyses, with examples, of the primitive, classical, oriental, Gothic, and Romanesque, in *Form Problems of the Gothic* (London, 1927).

assumes a connection in fact between a name and the thing it specifies. The more scientific view is that there is no one right definition for a word; each word is a symbol to which various meanings are attached by common usage, and there is nothing to prevent us from redistributing them in a more convenient way if we wish.[4]

In art criticism, then, one should not argue that a certain term *really* means so-and-so, but find out what various ideas it is made to mean, and what attitudes or types of response toward various works of art it seems to indicate.[5] Under the heading of each important critical term, one should list its approximate equivalents in other languages, and the chief general connotations of each. Dictionary definitions alone are often too brief, and omit recent senses of a word, so that study of its actual usage is necessary. When a writer does not define the term explicitly, his general meaning can usually be inferred from the context. One should list also the objects to which it is applied, theories associated with it, and other words used as synonyms and antonyms.

With a representative array of such data, in regard to many different words, one can try to distinguish merely verbal questions from others involving deeper conflicts of belief and attitude. It may be that some issues can be more clearly stated by redefining terms: that is, by detaching a certain meaning from a word that is very ambiguous, and deciding to call that meaning only by a certain other name. For example, we might decide to use the word "grotesque" for the favorable meaning of "ugly" just mentioned. In rare cases, an entirely new symbol may have to be coined.

What aesthetics needs in its terms now is more narrow, sharp precision, to make them more effective tools of communication. It has no lack of broad, comprehensive terms, or of terms with vague auras of poetic suggestiveness. Thinking in the manner of Croce's *Aesthetic* is for that reason apt to be more confusing than enlightening. It tries to define every concept in terms of every other: to show the "identity" of science, art, criticism, expression, intuition, and so on, by emphasizing points at which these concepts overlap, and ignoring differences. Such verbal interlocking gives a false impres-

[4] See C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning* (New York, 1926), for a discussion of the general subject of words.

[5] C. K. Ogden, I. A. Richards, and J. Wood have listed sixteen different meanings of "beauty" in *The Foundations of Aesthetics* (London, 1922).

sion that the subject matter itself has been genuinely organized and explained. Study of the overlappings and inclusions among concepts has its useful function if words are not mistaken for underlying facts, but philosophically minded theorists usually tend to exaggerate orders and hierarchies. We have more need at present for clear distinction between definitions, so that we shall know what is meant when a certain word is applied to a certain case.

7. Histories of form and style

The study of form types is obviously bound up with that of the history of art. Where aesthetics aims at principles, history aims at genetic and chronological sequences. But if aesthetics becomes inductive, it must turn to history for a large part of its data; and if art history becomes critical and philosophical, it must apply aesthetic concepts. The difference between the two will thus be largely one of different ways of organizing the same facts.

It is not generally realized how small a proportion of historical writing on the various arts is genuinely concerned with the history of forms. Most of it is history of miscellaneous facts associated with these forms: the names, dates, and biographies of artists, the titles and subjects of their principal works, leading events and environmental conditions of the time, and so on. As to the nature of the works of art themselves, in terms of such form analysis as we have been considering, there is sometimes not a trace, and often only brief, incidental, and conventional comment. The facts given may be interesting in themselves, and contribute to one's general culture. They may, if attractively written, cast an indirect glamor on the subject of art by leading one to imagine the romance of past civilizations and of being an artist. But they are misleading in so far as they are supposed to give an acquaintance with art itself, and in practice the mass of facts they present often tends to come like a screen between the student and the directly observable qualities of the objects he is learning about. He has so many things to remember that he cannot approach the work of art freely, with his eyes and mind open, to receive what it has to say.

The researches of experts on art history are as a rule made from some direct study of examples, but they tend to emphasize other aspects than form. There is much attention to small factual matters

not directly connected with aesthetic qualities—for example, in the visual arts, to the question of correct "attributions." Great pains are devoted to separating the genuine works of a certain man from works wrongly assigned to him, to detecting counterfeit signatures, and to supporting guesses as to the authorship of unsigned works. High fees and public interest put a premium on this work, but it may have nothing whatever to do with the nature of form, since the evidence is often to be found in microscopic details or other differentiae of no aesthetic importance. Work in iconography, the religious and other symbolism of certain works of art, though often of high importance as general knowledge, may also pass entirely over aesthetic qualities.

The great mass of work in art history is highly specialized, has no relation to the psychology of creation or appreciation, is dogmatic and conventional in standards of value, and is pervaded by a general air of dull pedantry and remoteness from life. The common fear in university circles of being thought "unscholarly" and "unsound" leads to a timid restriction to unchallengeable facts; thus to an avoidance of central critical and aesthetic issues. In the history of literature, as pursued in university research, the same heavy atmosphere of small pedantic facts exists. Students are too rarely encouraged to try original criticism or unusual modes of selecting and organizing data for study: they must summarize the life and works of trivial forgotten writers or trace the history of some linguistic detail.

Obviously any history that is to include the facts of aesthetic importance must be based on much direct analysis of works of art, and on the study of general form types. If the critic is primarily a historian, however, he will pay special attention to the chronological order of their production. He will try to trace the bit-by-bit growth of various types and styles; to follow gradual or sudden shifts of emphasis; the decline and disappearance of a given quality, and its later recurrence in a new context; the gradual diffusion of a great man's influence through the work of his successors. He will constantly be estimating the extent of a man's originality: what he received from different sources, what he added that had never appeared in art before, if only a new combination of old elements; how he developed or attenuated certain qualities of his predecessors.

The selection of what is important in the past can never be done

once and for all, in any branch of history. The entire work of many artists (El Greco, for instance) has been omitted from the histories of one generation only to be emphasized in the next. Constant revaluation goes on, as in the recent tendency to exalt the archaic Greek, early Renaissance, and primitive styles. But one can make, or fail to make, a persistent effort toward objectivity through giving specific demonstrable reasons for one's choices and judgments. By comparison with some other branches of history, that of art is unusually fortunate in this respect: that so large a part of its subject matter is still extant and observable. Instead of being forced to conjectural reconstructions of what may have happened, it can proceed, like the history of philosophy, to the tracing of genetic sequences within the phenomena spread out before it.

One constant danger is the tendency to oversimplify the past by reducing it to regular courses, to "laws," "rhythms," and "philosophies" of history. One should be especially wary, in these days, of reading too comprehensive evolutions and progresses into past art. Aside from the question of value, one must not suppose that all changes are continuous, or that there is any general tendency toward increasing complexity of form. The historian will find particular developments, such as the growth in Renaissance painting of the ability to represent solid objects in deep space. But he must not assume that the growth was steady, or that a later picture—say by Botticelli—is necessarily more developed along that line than an earlier one—say by Giotto. He will find many individual styles merging in the work of some synthesizing genius like Dante or Titian; but he will also find the later splitting apart of such a complex by narrower specialists who follow up only one of its elements. He will find moves toward intricacy, and simultaneous moves by other artists toward bare, austere simplicity. If there is any definite controlling tendency in the history of art, it has not yet been found.

The possible influence of environment on art has been a favorite theme of historians since Taine, and many plausible speculations about it have been made. But until much more is known than at present about the history of form, no theorizing can be very reliable about its relations with other types of phenomena. *A priori,* the idea of constant mutual influence between art and its environment seems highly probable. "Art," we say confidently, "is always the expression of its age." As long as we look chiefly at the subject matter of art,

and the uses to which it is put, the influence is quite obvious; but it is less so as we come to emphasize differences in form. Was Cézanne's interest in planes and masses a result, as Elie Faure suggests, of the topography and atmosphere of Provence? The notion is seductive; but it grows dubious when tested with a little elementary logic. How many artists have lived in very different climates, yet also emphasized planes and masses? How many have lived in similar crystal-clear, mountainous climates, yet emphasized something else? The answer to both is legion.

At present there is less pressing need for such imaginative flights than for patient description of observable genetic sequences. We need especially a new sort of history-writing which will not be for independent reading, but for reading in the presence of works of art, or in as close proximity to a direct experience of them as possible. We need historical guidebooks which will say: "If you want to follow the history of such-and-such a tendency (polytonality in modern music, for example), go first to this composition and listen especially to this and that parts of it. Then go to this other composition and observe a similar quality, but more marked and dominant in the whole form. Then to this third, and so on, noting what happens in each case to the quality you started with: how it develops, declines, and appears in new contexts." Such a type of art history could become of practical importance for appreciation, for criticism, and hence for aesthetics.

8. Questionnaires for analysis

Like other instruments, questionnaires can be used or misused. One way of misusing them is to ask foolish questions of persons who do not wish to be bothered answering them. Another is to publish statistical tabulations of a few answers in the belief that complicated problems are thereby settled.

For certain purposes, however, a questionnaire can be a very useful device. There is great need in the study of art for some way of getting people to look at the same objects, at the same parts of those objects, and to consider definite issues, one at a time, as they do so. A typical vice of aesthetic observation and discussion (from a scientific standpoint) is their tendency to wander aimlessly, and to confuse issues.

There is need also for some way of helping a beginner to get started on the process of analyzing and describing forms. If he is asked at once to analyze a given work of art, he is pretty sure to be lost in bewilderment. He gets only a blurred total effect, with some two or three conspicuous details standing out unrelatedly—a pleasing tune or color; an exciting incident. He has no idea of how to begin looking for the main outlines of structure.

One way to help him, of course, is to tell him, orally or in print, just what to look for, and to put the words in his mouth. A little of this may be indispensable when he is entirely inexperienced. But it runs the serious risk of destroying his independence, giving him habits of conformity, and making him think he sees and feels what he actually does not. Any comments or criticisms thus obtained are of little value as data for aesthetic generalization.

In view of this fact, some writers [6] have taken a position of extreme skepticism as to the value of any educational methods, or even criticism, as means of getting people to appreciate art. The problem is not peculiar to art, however, and no such complete abandonment of the task is necessary. It exists wherever education seeks to further spontaneous growth of mental powers, rather than to impart a fixed skill or to secure obedience. It is the universal problem of imparting the social heritage, which includes tested general ways of organizing individual conduct, without directing choices too specifically.

The questionnaire is proposed as one means to this end, not only for educating students, but also for co-ordinating critical research among experts. The general principle would be to provide the individual with lists of questions, suggesting specific possible qualities and modes of organizing form, which he can take up to any given work of art. There he can ask himself whether some of these possibilities exist in the case before him. He would, it goes without saying, be under no obligation to answer yes or no, or to choose among the possibilities suggested. He would be likely to find in every case qualities not mentioned by his questionnaire, and could recognize and describe them in fresh ways. Each question would be a hypothesis and no more. But it would perform the service of directing his attention for the moment to some particular locus, where, if the fact suggested were not found, some other significant fact within the same locus might be discovered. Even the absence of facts common

[6] Notably Leo Stein, *The A-B-C of Aesthetics* (New York, 1927).

in other works would be significant. He would thus be aided in trying, one after the other, various modes of perceiving and describing which have proven useful in past cases, but which, without the present definite suggestion, might not occur to him. His eyes might thus be opened to important relations within the form which he would otherwise miss. If he found the case highly unusual, he would at least have taken the first crucial step toward piercing the fog—a separate attention to various parts; and he could go on more steadily toward singling out its unique peculiarities.

The use of questionnaires in art study, as in other subjects, is of course nothing new; but it has never been sufficiently developed in an experimental spirit. Rather than give a sample list of questions, which space forbids, it may be well to consider some ways in which anyone can pursue the method for himself.

In the first place, it is well to take advantage of past experience as to the usual main divisions or factors in a work of art. Thus, for the analysis of music, a questionnaire might be divided into the familiar headings of melody, harmony, rhythm and tempo, counterpoint, timbre and orchestration, programmatic or expressive qualities, and so on. One for painting might be divided into line, light and dark, color, mass, and deep space; one for sculpture into line, plane and surface, mass, and (for occasional cases) color; one for verse, into the sound of words (including meter, rhythm, rhyme, alliteration and so on), the suggestive and emotive effects of words, imagery, descriptive and narrative elements, exposition and reasoning. There is no necessary grouping or sequence, and other modes of approach will suggest themselves in practice.

Each separate detail distinguished under these headings could be approached in different ways. What is its immediate sensuous effect when viewed apart from its context? (A bright, dull, rich, or barren spot of color; a reedy, brassy, or mellifluous tone, etc.) How is it interrelated with others under the same heading? (For example, take one melody with others as part of a regular pattern of theme-recurrence. One would mention how it is varied elsewhere, and contrasted with other main themes. Attention should be given to its part in small subordinate complexes, and to the part of each in the whole.) What representative or expressive significance has it? (Does it suggest some object, feeling, or idea in the outside world? If so what, and how realistically? As literal imitation, or with some selection,

intensification, or distortion?) What does it owe to the work of other artists? (In what ways is it reminiscent, in what original? How are old qualities changed, developed, strengthened, weakened?) After so scrutinizing each factor in detail, the final and not least important step is to ask how smoothly all fit together to produce a co-operative effect. This would include the relation of the various main factors in design to each other (melody, harmony, etc.) and the relation of these to the representative and expressive effects.

As we have seen, aesthetic qualities cannot be described in purely objective terms, and the finding of apt critical terms is no easy task. The questionnaire could offer aid by inserting, after each question, lists of critical words and phrases which might serve as approximate answers to it. Of a single melodic theme, for example, one might ask if it were crisp, jerky, spasmodic, suave, martial, exhilarating, caressing, soothing, harsh, monotonous, lilting, tumbling, wild, firm, decisive, wavering, tender, stately, grave, funereal, quaint, vigorous, voluptuous, pastoral. To consider each of these words for a second in reference to any given melody (for example the 'cello theme at the beginning of Schubert's Unfinished Symphony) may aid the student not only to verbal expression, but to feeling the distinctive quality of the thing as apart from its context. If none of the words suggested seems quite apt, another, or two or three others taken together, may come to mind.

There is no difficulty in making lists of such critical terms; it is rather in limiting oneself to those which will be most suggestive, and keeping the list down to practicable length. For that reason, rather than to take them wholesale from a dictionary or thesaurus, it would be better to take them from actual art criticism. Whenever a reader encounters an especially vivid bit of characterization, he can make a note of it, and to what it is applied. To quote at random from Roger Fry on El Greco: [7] "The extraordinary emphasis and amplitude of the rhythm, which thus gathers up into a few sweeping diagonals the whole complex of the vision"—"the melodramatic expression of a high-pitched religiosity"—"voluminous and massive garments which under the stress of an emphatic pose take heavy folds."

First of all, one should take such comments directly to the pictures they refer to, and see if they are justified. By that act the words will

[7] Roger E. Fry, *Vision and Design* (London, 1920), p. 207f.

lose a little of their abstractness and become symbols for concrete memory-images. Then one can include them, briefly, in a questionnaire, as possible modes of organization, of emotional expression, of treating drapery in a painting. Whenever one later encounters other ways of treating similar themes, and reads or thinks of words to describe them, one can enter these words also under the same headings. Gradually there will grow up a varied list of form types which one has experienced, arranged as a questionnaire under headings and subheadings referring to the chief common factors in art. As it gets unwieldy, it can be cut down or divided into separate questionnaires for various kinds of art.

At the same time, one can also be listing under the name of each style or form type the names of particular works of art in which one has found it especially manifest. For example, under some (not all) of the qualities just mentioned one can include the works of Baroque painters and sculptors after El Greco.

The way to use such a questionnaire is to read it in the presence of one work of art after another, of the general type with which it deals. Answers can then be written to those questions which seem most relevant to the object at hand; the others disregarded; and additional comments written which the questions did not cover. It is best to hear, read, or see the work of art first with an open mind, rather casually and without specific questioning; to begin analysis only after the first total effect has taken place.

For the visual and literary arts, there is no special difficulty met with in running through a questionnaire with the object beside one. For music, there are practical advantages in the use of mechanical reproducers, such as the phonograph and sound film. Although imperfect in tone quality and personal touch, records are suited to form analysis in that one can repeat a composition again and again, stop it in the middle and repeat a phrase, put on another record and play a comparable phrase in a different piece, and so on. But before and after analysis, one should hear the piece well performed.

An obvious question is whether it might not become very tedious to run through a long list of questions for each case. Some amount of taking pains is unavoidable if one's aim is intensive study. For beginners, it is usually necessary to go through an entire questionnaire several times in regard to various objects. But as the work progresses, short cuts become possible. As one becomes quicker at

seizing the main distinctive qualities of an object, one can pay attention largely to questions related to those, dispensing with the others and adapting the order of analysis to fit the case. For a picture which obviously makes no attempt at linear pattern, for example, one can at once rule out all groups of detailed questions under this heading. Finally, as far as informal appreciation is the aim, all questionnaires can be dispensed with as one learns how to go to work at analyzing form.

No few definite modes of approach to works of art should ever become habitual, however. For that reason a long questionnaire, asking many varied questions, is better at the start than a small one, since it runs less risk of directing answers. The danger of all suggestions, influences, models, and standards to independence of thought is in inverse proportion to their number and variety; the risk lies in exposing oneself, not to too many, but to too few. There is little danger and much stimulation in being under the influence of a teacher with strong opinions and preferences if he is not one's only teacher. For that reason art education should not fear to direct the student's attention in specific ways, provided it directs him in enough different ways so that he is forced to make his own choices. It would be undesirable for any few questionnaires ever to become standardized for art study. Rather, every teacher and every student should make his own, and his own list of answers, as he goes along. Each questionnaire should be a selective summary of what one has already perceived in art, so organized as to make it readily applicable as a set of hypotheses for the future.

9. Comparison of findings

Aesthetics in its present situation could profit from the example of Socrates. When faced by an apparently irreconcilable diversity of opinion on all subjects, analogous to that which now prevails on aesthetic value, he made a step toward science by comparing the opinions of his contemporaries, to see what possible basis of agreement might exist. Modern science has involved a constant checking up of results by various workers in the same subject. Carried over into aesthetics, this would suggest a systematic comparison of notes on the results of individual experiences in art. Its aim would be to discover more specifically how people agree and how they vary in

aesthetic responses and critical appraisals. It should be carried on in a purely descriptive spirit, without any disposition to impose one's opinion or mode of action on others. It should involve no fixed assumptions as to the correctness of any particular view, or the superior authority of any one person's taste. Neither should it assume that the majority is right, or that universal agreement on a proposition necessarily makes it true. It should be suspicious of apparent uniformities which may cover subtle variations, but take note of the former in so far as they appear.

Here again a practicable line of inquiry has been held up by imaginary theoretical obstacles. There has been much unwarranted mystification in aesthetics about the "uniqueness" and "ineffability" of each momentary experience. This attitude is partly justified as opposed to past hasty attempts to reduce all types of aesthetic response to one common denominator, such as "pleasure of the senses," or to settle questions of value by vote. Every individual's experience, and every moment in it, is no doubt different in some respects from every other, just as all oak trees are a little different. But there is no ground for assuming that the diversity between individuals is absolute, or for failing to study what resemblances apparently exist.

If there is any physiological evidence, it is to confirm the presumption of resemblances, for the nervous and glandular mechanisms which are said to function in affective behavior seem to have a certain basic similarity from person to person, as do human eyes. They may be vastly more variable, but the difference is one of degree, and some approximate uniformities may therefore conceivably be charted. If there is any evidence from crowd behavior, it is that the emotions and preferences of the public are remarkably similar. Many artists and connoisseurs, to be sure, place themselves in an altogether different category: each is sure that no one ever had feelings like his, or so exquisitely sensitive. Yet they use much the same language, flock in gatherings of their kind and after the same new idols with gregarious uniformity.

It is possible, of course, for two persons to agree entirely on a certain verbal criticism and yet be having very different inward experiences. In this fact lies the main force of the common contention that no objective study of aesthetic experiences is possible. Yet the

same contention may be made about the simplest sensory response, a "secondary" quality such as "red" as well as about a "tertiary" quality such as "graceful." As students in elementary philosophy are taught, we can never be absolutely sure that our experience in seeing a red rose is anything like another person's in a similar situation. He might be seeing some color totally beyond our ken, but if he spoke and acted in regard to it as we do toward our sensation, nobody would ever be the wiser. Yet that ultimate doubt is of no practical or scientific consequence whatever. We go on comparing the colors of things and working out standard color charts in relation to pigments and light-rays with high scientific reliability.

Are we justified in assuming that the "tertiary" qualities or affective responses are altogether different in kind? May it not be that some are almost as regularly predictable as some sensory responses? The line between simple perception and emotional apprehension is by no means easy to draw. Where would it come, for example, as between a red, a brilliant red, a dazzling, a glowing, a garish, and a warm or cheerful red? Can not certain tastes and odors be predicted, under ordinary conditions, as "delicious," "fragrant," "nauseous," or "bitter"? Even in the more complex and subtle arts, it may be possible to agree on more affective or evaluative critical terms than has been supposed: that a certain melody is "gay and sprightly"; or a certain tragedy "majestic, somber, and inevitable."

All literature, all civilized intercourse, and even the continuity of each individual self rest on the practical possibility of comparing perceptive, emotional, and evaluative experiences, of classifying them roughly under general concepts, and expressing them approximately in words. No theoretical quibbles should bar us from the task of making that comparison more precise and reliable.

The necessary means to that end is a systematic, co-operative study of the application of specific critical terms to specific works of art. What printed interchange of views now goes on among critics is for the most part casual and wandering, like a café-table conversation; issues are not clearly joined, or continuously followed up. What is needed instead is a detailed written record by each individual of his experience with, and critical judgment of, a great variety of works of art that are accessible to the public. Mr. Roger Fry has expressed a very sensible attitude for each experimenter to take. He should

watch, "with such honesty and detachment as he can command, his own reactions," then "lay his cards on the table and invite the reader to see whether his own reactions in any given case coincide." [8]

To be most effective, that comparison of reactions must be made systematic. Therein lies an opportunity for university and other centers of organized research. The answering of detailed questionnaires by many critics, in reference to the same works of art, would be an effective means to definite point-by-point comparison. From an increasing number of such records, properly tabulated, an increasingly reliable estimate could be formed by the agreement and disagreement in critical responses to any given case.

This work should be supplemented by research in collating critical comments by writers old and modern on the same works of art, artists, and schools. The whole body of past criticism, and much other literature as well, is a treasurehouse of recorded experiences with art, but it needs much co-ordination to bring out its meaning clearly. A practicable way to begin would be to select some well-known work of art—the Parthenon, Hamlet, the Fifth Symphony, the Laocoon, Mona Lisa—then, disregarding one's own opinion in the matter, simply bring together the various past comments upon it which seemed most significant. If a work of art has changed through age (the Mona Lisa, for instance), that fact should of course be considered as related to disagreements in criticism. General comments on the work as a whole should be placed side by side, and those on each separate part or aspect of it. This would supplement a line of research already suggested—that of tracing through critical literature the definitions and applications of a given critical term such as "romantic," "sublime," or "decadent."

The suggestions gained through these various lines of study should again be put into practice, and not rest idle in books or archives. Each clue to the opinions and behavior of someone else is a suggestion for use in one's own activity. Each individual can remain

[8] Roger E. Fry, *Transformations* (London, 1926), p. 1. Cf. Dewey, *Experience and Nature,* p. 35: the empirical method "places before others a map of the road that has been traveled; they may accordingly, if they will, retravel the road to inspect the landscape for themselves. Thus the findings of one may be rectified and extended by the findings of others," procuring (in philosophy) "that co-operative tendency toward consensus which marks inquiry in the natural sciences."

independent, true to the basic dictates of his own character, and yet profit to some extent by the experience of others. If that experience is made easily accessible, and expressed with reference to specific works of art, one can go again to these objects with an open mind, to see if one missed something of importance before, or whether for any reason one can voluntarily revise an earlier criticism. Thus observation, hypothesis, comparing notes, renewed observation, and revision of ideas can be never-ending phases of a single co-operative process.

Through directing such a process aesthetics might hope, not to attain any certain or exact solutions to its old problems, but to accelerate a little the natural evolution by which beliefs, in art as elsewhere, lose their local, ephemeral character and become tested products of social experience.

CHAPTER III

AESTHETIC PSYCHOLOGY

1. Its task in general

Where the study of form is mainly concerned with describing works of art as directly perceived and felt, psychology is concerned also with locating them in a larger setting of human behavior. It is interested in learning what forces in the artist's personality led up to their creation. It is interested in understanding the processes of appreciation more clearly than a person can who is giving his main attention to the objects before him and to the choice of appropriate critical terms. It is interested in discovering the relation of these creative and appreciative processes to other phases of human experience than those of art, and to the structure of the human organism.

In generalizing, the aesthetic psychologist will look for recurrences and types, not so much in the forms of art as in the experiences related to them. He will look for similarities of psychic response among varied contexts: for example, the occurrence of a certain characteristic feeling in the presence of works of art very different in form, and in other situations quite unconnected with

art. Conversely, he will note also how an identical work of art can arouse very different responses in different persons, or in the same person at different times. He will try to trace such phenomena to their causes in the human mechanism, and to individual differences in physique, character, special training, and temporary condition.

He will try to express his findings in terms of general psychology when possible, as well as in those of criticism, and to link them with such notions as perception, habit, learning, desire, and emotion. But at the same time he should bear in mind that those concepts as defined by psychology may be distorted through lack of knowledge about the very phenomena with which he is dealing. So he should treat them as suggestions, but be free to redefine them or form new ones as he goes along. He should not merely apply the theories worked out in other branches of psychology, but contribute to their development, and to the progress of that science as a whole toward a fuller understanding of the human mind. General psychology has not hitherto penetrated far into the details of the subtler emotional and imaginative phenomena, so aesthetics cannot learn much about them from that source. Rather it must be the other way around: if the aesthetician reports accurately about his own field, he can bring much information of value to the general psychologist.

The most important contribution of modern psychology to aesthetics has been an indirect and general one: a strengthening of the naturalistic world view by showing in detail how mental phenomena can be included within it. The result is a changing attitude toward art and aesthetic experience in general: a growing faith that they can sometime be understood in detail as continuous phases of the natural order revealed by science, without the need of resorting to supernatural and transcendental explanations. The rapid success of experimental psychology in adapting scientific method to a study of complex and variable phenomena, once considered hopelessly beyond the reach of science, has encouraged the belief that not even the most subtle phenomena of art and emotional life can remain forever mysterious. To take the place of the vague dogmas of idealistic aesthetics, there is an increasing demand for a naturalistic answer to every problem encountered in the arts.

Psychology also offers to aesthetics new conceptions of many particular mental mechanisms which seem to be involved in aesthetic

experience. Some of these, such as "empathy," [1] have been explicitly applied to art, with results less all-explanatory than were at first claimed, but with enough success to make them worth considering in certain types of case. Equally useful is the light shed on many familiar mechanisms, such as habit, emotion, and the learning process, which seem to operate in aesthetic quite as much as in other kinds of behavior. Practically all of the chief recent developments in psychology seem to have potential bearings on aesthetics, although it is too early in many cases to see exactly what those bearings may be.

2. Suggestions from laboratory psychology

Physiological psychology, for example, is making fast progress toward a localization of the nerve centers responsible for various mental functions. In so far as this describes the course of a sensory stimulus through perceptive and affective centers, and such basic mechanisms as rhythm and equilibrium, it may help us to understand, for example, what happens when we respond to vigorous martial or dance music. Most of the responses in art, however, are so complex as to leave little hope that they can be physiologically plotted. The same attitude must be taken toward biochemical studies of emotion, which correlate various endocrine secretions with various emotional states. It is interesting to know that violent fear changes the sugar content of the blood, but to describe the chemistry of aesthetic emotion would seem hopelessly complex and not especially important. There may be more to be learned from the correlation of certain types of character with certain types of physique (including excessive or insufficient functioning of certain glands) which can help explain peculiar mental and emotional trends, including the production of and preference for certain types of art.

It is significant that Fechner's attempt at inductive study of aesthetics, in the seventies, bore more fruit in general psychology than it did along the lines he anticipated. His work in measuring sensory responses and experimenting with various stimuli was one of the

[1] "We attribute to outer things our own feeling of force, our own feeling of striving or willing, our own activity or passivity." This theory of Lipps has been emphasized by Vernon Lee (in *The Beautiful,* Cambridge, 1913), and by H. S. Langfeld (in *The Aesthetic Attitude,* New York, 1920).

pioneer steps toward laboratory psychology, which by 1890 was assuming the proportions of a new science. It has never been able to deal very successfully with volition and emotion, but has greatly illuminated the processes of perception, recognition, and memory, which are also directly and constantly involved in aesthetic experience.

Much is to be hoped for from further experiment on the borderline between simple perception and feeling, such as the effects of brilliance and richness of color, of various combinations of hue and types of linear pattern; of concord, discord, and varying rhythm in musical tones, and so on.[2] The use of exact laboratory methods in aesthetics as far as they will go is altogether desirable, provided too much is not expected from them, and provided they are supplemented by other approaches.

They labor under grave difficulties, however. It should be remembered, for example, that the effect of any simple percept by itself may be quite different from its effect in a larger form. The effect of two strips of colored paper side by side, or of a simple chord progression, is no trustworthy sign of what their effects would be in works of art. Nor can one infer from the physically measured ratios of light-waves and sound-waves exactly what effects of harmony or conflict they will produce; for too many psychic factors complicate the situation. These are serious obstacles to all generalizations, based on physics, about the harmony of colors or of tones. It should also be remembered that laboratory conditions are not apt to be favorable to any full and spontaneous emotional experience. Still another difficulty is that tests demanding description of an object or an experience assume a considerable degree of skill in verbal expression. As pointed out in the previous section, verbal difficulties are not a complete barrier to aesthetic research, but they are a complicating factor to be taken into account. They are a necessary but distorting medium between the experimenter and the person he is testing, unless that person is himself.

[2] Cf. John Redfield, *Music, a Science and an Art* (New York, 1928).

3. From genetic and comparative psychology

The recent demise of the instinct theory (for the present at least) is no great loss to aesthetics. It was not especially helpful to try to analyze aesthetic experience into the workings of a list of unitary "inborn drives," such as hunger, sex, shelter, mastery, gregariousness, pugnacity, and the rest. If genetically traceable to these antecedents, it exhibits them in such modified form that their original identity is lost. The emphasis of the recent Gestalt school on total unified configurations in behavior, rather than on isolated factors, is a much more promising approach to aesthetics. In such concepts as "configuration" and "redintegration" we are coming much closer to the apparent nature of a complex aesthetic response to a total form.

Aside from special theories, the teachings of genetic and comparative psychology have already had a far-reaching influence on aesthetics. They have shown the origins of civilized mentality in that of prehuman and primitive ancestors, and the present resemblance of much human thinking to that of lower animals. By thus locating the human mind in an evolutionary process, they have confirmed the hypothesis of the rise of art out of primary organic functioning, and its continuity with the rest of human behavior. Anthropology, by showing the past variation in standards of artistic value and the relations of art to other social activities, such as religion, tends to strengthen a relativistic theory of aesthetic values. It leads to the belief that standards of beauty, tendencies to produce and admire certain kinds of art, are not fixed and universal, but products partly of varying social environments, and partly of individual differences. Psychology still further corroborates this view by explaining the general mechanisms by which habits of preference are formed.

One of the main achievements of recent psychology has been its investigation of the learning process: not the mere memorizing of facts and theories, but the acquirement of habits, and of modes of surmounting difficulties. Part of this study has been devoted to the lower, sub-rational levels of learning (in both animals and man), and part to the level of intelligent choice and reasoning. At the former level its chief result has been the principle of the conditioned reflex. At birth, an animal is capable of responding to only a few sorts of

stimulus, which call forth automatic movements; but if one of these stimuli is frequently accompanied by a different one, the organism gradually learns to respond to the second alone, as originally it would have responded only if the first were present. This mode of learning, which occurs in very simple forms of life, has been said to be fundamental also to human behavior, from infancy onward, and to be the organic basis of inductive reasoning. It suggests that the formation of habits and standards of aesthetic preference could be similarly studied, through observing and experimenting with the responses of children to aesthetic stimuli under various accompanying circumstances.

Of equal or greater importance to aesthetics, since it deals directly with the higher levels of culture, has been the study of the processes of reasoning, intelligent learning, and valuation. Here the general drift of opinion has been voluntaristic, anti-intellectualistic: which is to say that these processes are no longer regarded as purely logical, abstract, and formal, but as directed by organic impulse, influenced by the "will to believe" even when apparently rational. It means, too, that reasoning is interpreted as a phase of organic functioning; as an outgrowth of the power of adjusting conflicts of impulse which the higher animals have developed in the course of evolution. Intelligent choice is conceived as a process of trying to foresee the results of various possible alternatives in action. This trend in psychology has gone along with the pragmatic doctrine that scientific and philosophic thinking, including moral and aesthetic valuation, are not only practical in origin but should be more consciously devoted to practical ends; should give more recognition to the irregular and unintellectual elements in experience; and more effort to tracing the consequences to which certain beliefs lead in action.[3] The present essay applies some of these ideas to the field of aesthetics.

4. From educational psychology

Study of the learning process at its higher levels has naturally been closely bound up with educational theory and practice. Here again there have been movements significant to aesthetics. One is an increasing emphasis on the Rousseau tradition of freedom, and on

[3] See William James, *Pragmatism* (New York, 1907); John Dewey, *Essays in Experimental Logic* (Chicago, 1916) and *Experience and Nature.*

Schiller's doctrine of the connection between art and play. This has led to an effort to stimulate original experimentation and the play spirit in art study. It has at times been characterized by an extreme exaltation of "free expression," assailing all directive influence as harmful; at times by the more moderate ideal of intelligent growth.

Also of possible bearing on aesthetics is the development of educational tests and measurements. The detailed study of individual differences is a step away from the common tendency of psychologists to oversimplify mental phenomena, to reduce all to rule, and overlook variations. Any approach to aesthetic psychology should be extremely hesitant about affirming universal regularities, and sensitive to subtle variations from person to person and moment to moment. Unfortunately, even the measurement of individual differences can be oversimplified, by labeling a person as of a certain type (e.g., introvert or extrovert) or as of a certain total intelligence quotient, and neglecting his further peculiarities.

Recent attempts to adapt mental tests to the study of aesthetic phenomena have tended to perpetuate the chief fault of the Fechner tradition: its overemphasis on quantitative measurements. A frequent device is to present a series of examples of works of art to a number of persons, to be arranged in order of preference. One trouble with such an approach is that an apparent agreement on general relative merit may cover a great difference in inward responses and modes of valuation. Another is that the psychologist's own assumption as to the relative merit of the examples may be questionable, so that conformity with it is no sure criterion of superior taste. The tendency is to make the scale of values, say in a test of drawing ability, accord with conventional academic ideas of good drawing, the neater and more exactly representative being unjustifiably assumed to be always better. Examples presented for choice are usually not whole original works of art, but reproductions and excerpts, black and white photographs of paintings, and phrases culled from musical compositions. Thus isolated, these fragments are apt to lose all their original significance. In "spoiling" them for test purposes, one may be merely changing them into other themes, less smooth and concordant perhaps, which would be equally good in some other musical context. All statistics resulting from such dubious "tests" are less scientific than they sound.

There is need in this type of research for more careful study of what a given test assumes and what it really measures; for more use

of whole original works of art; more contact with art criticism, more recognition of specific variable factors involved in the behavior under observation; more caution in interpreting statistical results. With these, the method of controlled experiment is capable of indefinite and fruitful extension in aesthetics. One of its most promising phases is the attempt to correlate preferences with different age and educational groups, and with different degrees of artistic training.[4] Statistical correlation is the greatest achievement of scientific method for dealing with large masses of complex and variable data; and its general principles can be used to guide inductive study even where numerical conclusions are unreliable. In fields other than art, mental tests have been worked out with increasing reliability and highly useful results. With a proper understanding of the peculiarities of aesthetic phenomena, there is no prophesying how far they may be able to go in this field also.

5. From psychoanalysis

Up to the present, the doctrines of Freud, Jung, Adler, and Stekel have been less far-reaching in the interpretation of art than they were expected to be. The search for Oedipus complexes, erotic symbolism, and unconscious wish-fulfillments has been more successful in literature than elsewhere, especially in interpreting primitive myths, fairy tales, and poetic imagery, and in analyzing the motivation of characters in fiction.[5] In the visual arts and in music it has

[4] Cf. R. Pintner, "Aesthetic Appreciation of Pictures by Children," *Pedagogical Seminary* (1918), pp. 216-218; see also studies listed in the *Psychological Bulletin* (1920), p. 331. C. E. Seashore's work in testing musical ability is of especial importance; cf. *The Psychology of Musical Talent* (Boston and New York, 1919).

[5] Noteworthy studies in various arts are S. Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci* (New York, 1916), and *Totem and Taboo* (New York, 1918); C. G. Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious* (New York, 1916); E. J. Kempf, *Psychopathology* (St. Louis, 1920); F. C. Prescott, *Poetry and Dreams* (New York, 1912); J. W. Krutch, *Edgar Allan Poe* (New York, 1926); A. G. Tansley, *The New Psychology* (London, 1920); B. M. Hinkle, *The Recreating of the Individual* (New York, 1923); C. Baudouin, *Psychoanalysis and Aesthetics* (London, 1924).

[Note: Since 1928, when this essay was first published, many additional works of importance on the psychoanalysis of art have appeared. Some are mentioned elsewhere in the present volume. Toward the end of 1956, a more favorable verdict might be made on the success of this approach to aesthetic psychology.]

met with less success. A number of pretentious efforts to psychoanalyze the arts have been disappointingly farfetched. When plausible in explaining details of subject matter, or the character of an artist, they usually fall short of explaining those distinctive qualities of form that make the artist and his work aesthetically important.

It is hard to abandon all hope of progress along this line, however, since the phenomena studied by psychoanalysis appear on the whole to be so closely related to those of aesthetics. It is the only branch of psychology which tries to observe and explain in detail specific affective and volitional states in the individual as subtle, varied, and intricate as those encountered in the arts. It studies strange illusions, images, symbols, fantasies, dreams, vague but intense emotions, ecstasies, fascinations, loves and hates, and conflicting attitudes which combine both attraction and repulsion. It studies the unconscious projection of emotional states on other persons and objects. All of these types of phenomena have been said to occur in aesthetic experience, in both its creative and appreciative phases. The very existence of some of them was almost unrealized a generation ago, although we see now that they are enigmatically dramatized in the writings of a Blake or a Dostoevsky. Yet psychoanalysis has made a noteworthy effort to observe and describe them in clear scientific terms. It has advanced plausible if not entirely adequate theories of their causation through its ideas of repressed conflict, the libido, and the sense of inferiority. Going further, it has suggested modes of control, and in some cases put them successfully into practice. Its technique of exploring the depths of imaginative life, its bold attempt to adapt scientific method to a study of phenomena apparently beyond the reach of science, are worthy of respectful consideration by the aesthetic psychologist.

One reason for its present inadequacy in the field of aesthetics, perhaps, is its emphasis on the psychopathic forms of the phenomena it studies. This is due to its origin as an outgrowth of medicine, and to the therapeutic character of its practical activities. It is also due to the fact that in a neurotic personality mechanisms appear in hypertrophied and therefore obvious forms, which in a normal one are slighter and more completely hidden. This preoccupation with the anxious and painful results of internal conflict has given a questionable trend to its general theorizing. It has seemed to imply, at times, that all dreams and fantasies, all mysterious desires and

emotions, are morbid and should be destroyed by bringing them into the cold light of day. Some illusions and fantasies are vital to the aesthetic imagination, and in regarding them all with this hygienic antipathy, the psychoanalyst tends to disparage something very precious to art. In approaching its phenomena with such ethical and other evaluative prejudices, psychoanalysis fails to be scientifically objective and dispassionate. If its illuminating method is to be successfully carried over into aesthetics, we must learn to explore the unconscious processes of relatively normal persons, without overworking a few simple explanations, and without preconceptions as to what ought to be done. We must recognize at least a possibility that some kinds of unanalyzed fantasy, some kinds of unconscious conflict, and emotional projection are and ought to be cultivated rather than destroyed in art and life, so long as they are kept within general limits of control.

6. From behaviorism

This word has had a varied history, and is rather ambiguous in consequence. A generation ago, it was used to characterize the general movement toward induction and laboratory experiment which was superseding the old faculty psychology based on introspection and metaphysics. Now it has become associated with a special doctrine within that inductive approach which goes to extremes in denying all scientific value to introspection, insisting that psychology be based entirely on data derived from observation of the overt actions of organisms, and attempting to reduce higher thought processes to muscular movements. This extreme doctrine has few supporters, but it has achieved great publicity, and other approaches to psychology seem to feel obliged to defend themselves against the charge that they are "subjective" and therefore unscientific.

In answer to this doctrine, Bertrand Russell has pointed out that observation of the movements of animals is a process by no means free from "subjectivity," or from liability to error because of the human and personal limitations of the observer. He has pointed out also that self-observation, if carefully controlled and checked up, can be made to yield significant and not entirely unreliable data.[6]

[6] B. Russell, *Philosophy* (New York, 1927), especially Ch. XVI, "Self-observation."

This does not mean a return to the old implicit faith in introspection; we now realize its great liability to error through self-deception. But its data are not to be completely ignored. One can, if conscious of the dangers, try to guard against them and adopt a fairly objective attitude, even in observing one's own subjective percepts, feelings, and modes of inference. By comparing our findings, we can still further test their reliability—in short, adopt an experimentally inductive method in self-observation.

The aesthetic psychologist need have no fear that in observing his own reactions or asking other persons about theirs, he is necessarily stepping outside the pale of science. Much of the best in modern psychology, especially that dealing with the higher thought processes, has arisen partly out of judicious self-observation, combined with ways of inferring the thought processes of others which would never satisfy a rigorous behaviorist.

On its constructive side, behaviorism (in the broad sense) has much of value to suggest to aesthetics. It stresses the importance of observing the outward actions of people rather than believing implicitly what they say about themselves. From a sense of duty, or to appear cultured, people often say and even believe they are getting tremendous enjoyment from the fine arts; whereas, to quote Mr. Leo Stein, "One could empty almost any art gallery with a nice thrilling accident enacted before its doors." What people devote time and effort to, sacrifice other pleasures for, what books they read and what plays they see when no "highbrow" accquaintances are looking on, may be a much truer index of their real tastes than what they profess to like. The votes of college seniors on their favorite authors are not a good indication of what books and magazines will be found in their rooms. Observation of how people of various types actually spend their leisure time and surplus money might afford some illuminating data to aesthetic psychology. In addition, something can perhaps be accomplished through observing the actions of persons in the presence of works of art,[7] although these are extremely dubious clues to what is going on inside their minds.

What the laboratory psychologist tends to forget is that spoken and written words are themselves a form of behavior, and a form

[7] Cf. E. S. Robinson, *The Behavior of Museum Visitors* (Washington, D. C., 1928).

which can be studied as objectively as the fumblings of animals in a cage. Expressed criticisms of works of art, and attempts to put inward experiences into words, are not merely failures to describe something else; they are themselves phenomena rather closely related to aesthetic experience. They may be quite as significant a clue to the mental processes behind them as the monkey's piling up of boxes is to his mentality. Any conception of human behavior which omits the writing of poems and systems of philosophy, the playing of violins and the carving of statues, the attempt to appraise these things in logical and intelligible words, or any psychology which fails to take account of them, is too narrow to deserve the name.

It is this narrow-mindedness in some natural scientists which gives continued strength to the mystic and idealist, with their talk of a "subjective" world and of realities and values which cannot be reduced to material terms. A philosophy based on such distorted science will rightly appear one-sided and demeaning to those gifted with more sensitive intuitions. While it fails to correct itself, it will be distrusted; it will need supplementing at the hands of religious, metaphysical, and poetic imagination. But a total world view thus built of maladjusted and conflicting parts can never be fully rational. It remains for science itself to broaden its outlook. Without abandoning its experimental approach, or its conception of the physical basis of things, it can go on to adapt that approach to a more sympathetic study of what Santayana has called the "ideal fulfillments."

7. The production of art

Aesthetics should make use of the methods of general psychology as far as they will go. But in addition, it should endeavor to further the movement already begun in criticism toward a clearer understanding of the psychic factors involved in the creation and appreciation of art.

In regard to production, there is a wealth of material in biography, memoirs, artists' notes and sketches that has never been properly co-ordinated. A possible line of research would be to go through the biographies and autobiographies of artists (of minor as well as major importance), and through miscellaneous memoirs about them. The information derived should be classified for ready comparison under

various headings. For example, it would be significant to know more about their general physical, nervous, and mental condition. Among other uses, this would help test the popular theory that genius is allied to insanity. We should have more comparative data on their heredity, early environment, and traits manifested; [8] their general education and culture; their special training and influences in art; their character and interests as shown in other activities and relations; their one-sidedness or versatility. We should know their aims and standards of value in so far as they tried to express them otherwise than in their chosen medium; their likes and dislikes in art; the extent of their tolerance and appreciation toward other artists. We should look for facts about their mode of procedure in creation; [9] their technical methods, materials, and devices; their preliminary blocking-out of a composition; how much conscious and systematic plan they followed; how much they went ahead by undirected impulse, sudden intuition and inspiration; to what extent and how they criticized their own work; how much difficulty they had in realizing forms satisfactory to themselves; to what extent they followed explicit conventional rules and models; to what extent they were able to conceive a work of art as a whole before expression; to what extent and how they revised their first conception in manipulating the medium.

All the above groups of data should be correlated with critical summaries of the forms which the artists produced, with the aim of finding whether certain types of psychic factor and condition tend to produce certain types of form. It should never be assumed in advance that any known peculiarity or motive in the artist will show itself in his work. There is great danger of reading such known facts into critical appraisal of the work itself. Firmly integrated products have come from personalities torn with internal conflict; important works from minds agitated over sordid trifles. An artist may create in spite of himself, or in spite of a part of himself; to escape from that part, or to correct it in imagination and transcend it through achievement.

[8] E.g., G. Revesz, *The Psychology of a Musical Prodigy* (London, 1925).
[9] E.g., J. L. Lowes, *The Road to Xanadu* (Boston, 1927), on Coleridge.

8. Education for creativeness

Potentially, the most valuable of all sources of knowledge about artistic creativeness is the field of art education. It can become so, however, only if a more experimental attitude is adopted in that field. Training in the practice and appreciation of every art, in so far as it can go beyond the imparting of a set skill for vocational aims, should be regarded as an opportunity to experiment with a variety of methods, and to note their results as psychological data. Experimental schools should try not one but many methods, from "free expression" to the various stricter types that have been followed in the craft guilds and workshops of other days and other civilizations.

We know so little of the factors determining creative genius that it is impossible to say with confidence that any given method will stimulate it. Even "free expression" has not been an unqualified success along this line, after the first few years of childish interest. Genius has flowered from educational methods that would now be considered narrow and repressive in the extreme. Oftentimes it seems as though some cramping, irritating counterforce were necessary to urge it into animated reaction. We cannot be sure that rationality, tolerance, catholicity of taste, lack of dogmatism—any of the aims now sought in general education—will be more an advantage than a drawback in a given case. Perhaps the creative mind needs other educational methods than the appreciative. Perhaps, as often charged, our whole system of education in the arts, especially in colleges, is such as to make critics rather than artists. Perhaps education can have little effect one way or the other, and the appearance of creativeness will always be an unpredictable, uncontrollable miracle. Perhaps that quality can be influenced through eugenics; or through proper conditioning of reflexes in infancy, as the behaviorists believe. But we have not experimented enough with educational methods to give up hope that they may sometime become reliable means of development of creative originality.

There is need especially for experiment with a middle course in art instruction that would be less fearful of outside influence than the free expression method, and less narrowly rigid than the academic method. There is need for a way of imparting to students the social heritage of traditional forms, and trained experience in

techniques, without determining the special trends which their activities shall take. This could be accomplished by placing within the student's easy reach a great variety of concrete examples of widely different forms of art, so that he might be stimulated by them, but forced to choose for himself which line he would follow up, or how he would try to select, combine, and alter various forms. He should initiate all productive enterprises for himself; but if he came to a serious difficulty, or seemed to be settling into a stereotyped weakness, the teacher could bring to his attention some past examples of art that treated in other ways problems similar to his present one. This would of course require on the part of the teacher not only a persistently experimental attitude, but familiarity with the history of forms.[10]

This and other methods could be tried with different groups of students, selected and unselected; so that one could estimate their results for different types of persons, and in different arts and special activities.

From all the foregoing data, the psychologist should try to generalize on the factors involved in the creation of art: the more constant and the principal variations. He should go farther, and compare creativeness in art with that in other lines, such as science, philosophy, religion, and statesmanship; to see what capacities are limited to art and what transferable to other pursuits; what common and variable features characterize the power to organize new forms in different fields of activity.

9. Appreciation

The study of the heterogeneous group of phenomena denoted by this word has suffered from the usual tendency of aestheticians to rush into oversimple generalizations and arbitrary rules. Much effort has been spent in arguing that some one sort of experience is *the* aesthetic experience, as if there were only one; that all other ways of responding to art but the one prescribed are spurious, vulgar imitations.

Right or wrong, such pronouncements need backing up with more

[10] For a fuller presentation of this method, see the author's essays, "A Constructive Program for Teaching Art," "Franz Cizek and the Free Expression Method," "The Art Academies and Modern Education," *Journal of the Barnes Foundation* (April and October, 1925, and April, 1926).

impartial observation of the facts than has ever taken place. Rather than to start out with an exclusive definition of what is *really* aesthetic experience, or a dictum as to how people *ought* to look at art, an experimental attitude would be to find out in what various ways they *do* look at art, and what the specific consequences are of each.

Our ordinary names for aesthetic experience are vague, and cover up many possible variations. "Appreciation" suggests conscious appraisal, a judgment of values; whereas one may "prize" and enjoy a work of art without attempting any judgment on it. "Contemplation" suggests an exclusively passive attitude, or a Platonic, intellectual knowledge of the good. "Enjoyment" suggests a definite thrill of delight which is not always present in aesthetic experience. All of these words, and others to assist them, need precise redefinition through use in practice, as tools for distinguishing between actual experiences felt to be unlike.

Instead of arguing any question in the abstract, the experimenter should try to put it into action. Whenever he reads a description of some process or attitude said to be essential or common in aesthetic experience, let him try to live that process. Take, for example, Mr. H. D. Waley's theory: "I shall consider the process of dreaming, whether in reverie, natural sleep, or artificially induced trance states, to be the prototype of all aesthetic experience. These states exhibit in the purest form what I select as the distinctive features of the aesthetic experience, namely, an obstruction of the channels both of ratiocination and conation, together with a shifting of attention to the remaining elements of consciousness." [11] Here is one theory; others would differ, and deny that aesthetic experience is necessarily dreamy, or non-ratiocinative. Ogden, Richards, and Wood have proposed the term "synaesthesis," to describe an equilibrium, with no tendency to action, which gives "free play to every impulse, with entire avoidance of frustration." [12]

As Mr. Waley remarks, the suppression of reasoning is not a thing

[11] "The Limitations of Experimental Aesthetics," *Psyche* (1925), p. 226.

[12] *The Foundations of Aesthetics,* p. 75. See also I. A. Richards, *The Principles of Literary Criticism* (London, 1925). Other psychological theories of appreciation may be found in E. D. Puffer, *The Psychology of Beauty* (Boston, 1905); De Witt H. Parker, *Principles of Aesthetics* (Boston, 1920); Laurence Buermeyer, *The Aesthetic Experience* (Merion, Pa., 1924).

that can be done at will in a laboratory experiment, and no doubt synaesthesis also is a state to be hoped for rather than accomplished on demand. But there is nothing to prevent one from going about the enjoyment of art in an undirected, spontaneous way, then looking back in his more reflective moments to see if and when his experience has corresponded with the description. Having understood the concept, we can see if it works as an explanation of past events. Other attitudes can be assumed at will with fair success, after practice, such as ignoring subject matter in a picture and noticing only line, color and mass arrangements.

As far as the superior value of any particular attitude is concerned, one can get at the question for oneself only by trying various attitudes persistently, and appraising their consequences in terms of cumulative interest, richness, intensity, or whatever other criteria one chooses to employ. Here is another opportunity for art education, in its appreciative phase: to stimulate in students various ways of looking at or responding to a work of art and to note the consequences in terms of interest manifested, power to discriminate, effects on other studies, and so on.

In the study of appreciation, as well as in form analysis, the questionnaire is of great potential utility. It can direct the observer's attention to one special phase of his own experience after another, and help him to gather specific, readily comparable data from other persons.[13] Much of the difficulty in describing subtle experiences is due to the fact, not that no adequate words exist, but that one cannot think of them; also to the fact that an experience may be too many-sided to describe all at once. If a man is asked how he feels when he listens to music, he will probably say that the question is foolish and unanswerable. But if he hears for the first time Debussy's *Jardins sous la pluie,* without knowing its title, and is immediately asked if it suggested any visual images to him, he may have something definite to answer. Psychoanalysis has demonstrated the efficacy of specific, directed questioning in bringing out significant facts about inward mental processes, even though the person questioned does not understand their full significance.

Questions should as a rule refer to particular works of art, and be directed to throw light on whatever points are of interest to psychology: such as the amount of attention to associated ideas,

[13] Cf. Max Schoen (ed.), *The Effects of Music* (New York, 1927).

rather than to direct, full perception; of attempt at rational appraisal; of passive contemplation or "drowsy reverie"; of felt desire or tendency to act toward the object or something represented by it; of positive liking or disliking, pain, discomfort, boredom, fatigue, disgust, disapproval, soothing or exciting effect, empathy, expansiveness, felt physical rhythm or thrill, appeal of an erotic, religious, or intellectual order, fixed or wavering attention and interest, ease of grasping the object as a whole—in short, to bring out whatever responses of interest to aesthetics are not included within a description of the object's form. It will be worth while to ask the same questions of the same person about the same work of art on more than one occasion, to reveal possible changes of attitude: sudden aversion or satiety; gradually increasing interest in form, and so on. These should be correlated, if possible, with other changes in physical, mental, or emotional condition, basic or transitory, which may help to explain them.

10. Words as data for psychology

In regard to the description of form, we have already noticed the importance of studying the use of specific critical terms: to what objects and parts of objects each has been applied by critics old and modern, and with what general connotations. For purposes of psychology, it will be relevant to carry the investigation further. Each critical term, we have seen, is an attempt to name and characterize a "tertiary quality"; an affective, conative, or evaluative response which may be projected on the object and felt as a part of it. In the description of form, we were interested largely in those factors in the object which helped determine the nature of the response; here we are interested in those other co-operating causes which lie in the make-up of the individual.

Starting with the fact that a certain person has applied to a certain object the word "sublime," "graceful," "awkward," "dull," or some other critical epithet, it becomes our problem to try to penetrate behind that word to the mental mechanisms that helped call it forth. In a single case, it may be impossible to infer such causation; but through applying the principles of induction to a large number of cases, we may strengthen a hypothesis. In regard to the alleged obscenity of a certain book or statue, we are apt to ask something

about the people who call it so. Are they mostly persons who by other statements or manifestations have shown themselves extremely puritanical, repressed, or ascetic? What of the persons who deny its obscenity? Are they of the other extreme, or are they an average sampling of fairly respectable human beings? Such correlated facts are regarded in everyday thinking as possible clues to the psychic factors involved in criticism.

To make inference of this sort at all reliable, it has to be based not only on many cases, but on many details about each, so as to guard against overlooking unsuspected contributing factors. For that reason, research should include a variety of facts about each critic, even some that seem to have no obvious bearing; as more and more data accumulate, significant correlations may appear. In regard to each writer whose judgment on a work of art is noted, and each person who answers the experimenter's questions, a variety of biographical facts should be noted, as in the study of creativeness: age, education, special training in art, normality of sense organs, main interests and habits, and the like. A painfully methodical grubbing of details, it may seem; but all inductive science is based upon them.

Along this line we may hope eventually to throw some light on the crucial issue of differences in level of taste. In regard to a given object or type of form, what are the expressed responses of the persons who claim to be expert connoisseurs, and how much agreement is there between them? What of the academically trained artists, and of the radical modernists? Of persons of general or scientific culture, but untrained in art? Of uneducated persons with high intelligence quotients? Of children at various ages? Are there notable sex differences in responses to a given case or type which seem to be universal or nearly so, and may be due to basic human traits? Are there others peculiar to certain types of character and training? Still others which are due to rare personal idiosyncrasies? Are the simple perceptive responses the most uniform? How do the affective, associative, conative, motor, ratiocinative, and evaluative responses compare with each other as groups, in respect to a tendency to vary in individual cases? Within each group, which responses are the commonest and which the rarest? A judicious use of statistical methods is of course necessary in this sort of research.

By comparing these data with those acquired on creativeness, one

could approach such traditional problems as the extent to which appreciation tends to repeat the artist's process of creation, and what the essential differences are.

Data should also be classified with reference to words commonly used in criticism. With regard to each, the psychologist should list not only its chief definitions and the objects to which it is applied (as suggested in the previous chapter) but also whatever can be inferred from contexts about the motivation behind its use. This would include the apparent emotional attitudes, as of strong like or dislike, admiration or indignation, and whatever explicit judgments of value it is intended to convey.

There is no reason why the same mode of approach should not be extended to an investigation of experience outside the world of art, yet similar in nature. The common idea that "criticism" can be directed only toward art and not toward nature is misleading. A natural scene can be appraised in terms of its form in exactly the same way that a painted picture is appraised; the song of birds is surely a kind of music, and some conversation is literature. If there are frequent differences, as in origin, degree of selectiveness, and unity, it is important to recognize them; but one should hesitate before assuming any radical difference in kind between objects of art and nature as forms, or between our ways of responding to them. We can admire a picture disinterestedly, or with a strong desire to own it; likewise a natural scene. The terms used in art criticism are practically all applied to things, persons, events, and qualities in daily life; and so, as far as present evidence indicates, are all the possible modes of psychic response to art.

One way to approach the vexed questions of the relation between art and nature, aesthetic and other types of experience, aesthetics and nature, aesthetic and other types of experience, aesthetics and ethics, is through observing the wider applications of critical words. Study of the functioning of a given term in art criticism could well be extended, in important cases, to a study of its applications to objects other than art. General psychology could profit considerably from more detailed knowledge of typical complex affective and conative responses, habits, and configurations. These are hard to experiment with or observe directly, but poetry, drama, and fiction are full of attempts to express and describe them distinctly. Literature is rich in yet uninterpreted data for the psychologist.

He can examine it for verbal expressions of each principal emo-

tion and sentiment, and for finer shades of mixed, vague, or conflicting feelings; for words expressing the feeling-tone of direct perceptions, and for those more expressive of association, comparison, desire, regret, and reasoned valuation. He can give special attention to the names for affective qualities of the "lower" sense reactions, such as "aromatic," "pungent," "bitter," "zestful," "piquant," "cloying," "tingling," and "soothing," and for simple affects of the higher senses, such as "dazzling," "somber," "luminous," "shrill," "raucous," and "mellifluous." By noticing the stimuli to which each word is applied, and the accompanying conditions and expressed attitudes, he can approach a comparison with the effects of similar stimuli embodied in works of art as to relative intensity, poignancy, and the cumulative power of organized form. Such literary data could be correlated with experiment on the comparative nature of the lower and higher senses, as to their tendency to rapid satiety and anaesthesia, their power to suggest definite associated images and emotions, and their degree of capacity for being organized into forms and contrasting sequences. Individual differences, such as the tendency to visual or auditory imagination, or to special bonds between the senses like color-hearing and tone-vision, could also be studied through a combination of fresh experiment and the analysis of literature.

In carrying the study of critical terms to those applied to persons and modes of conduct, such as "noble," "wicked," "amiable," "seductive," "domineering," "furtive," "antagonistic," and the like, we should be co-ordinating data for both aesthetics and ethics. The latter field also could profit much by detailed psychological study of the complex variety of human relations.

CHAPTER IV

VALUATION AND VALUE STANDARDS

1. The need of descriptive study

It is still a current practice to distinguish aesthetics and ethics as "normative" sciences, dealing with "values," from "descriptive" sciences, dealing with "facts." This antithesis obviously suggests (whether or not it is always so intended) that values are not facts,

but some strange sort of entities apart from the natural order of things. It suggests, further, that no descriptive study of moral or aesthetic phenomena is needed or possible; and that norms or standards can be laid down without prior observation of the activities they are intended to regulate. All of these implications are untenable on the basis of a naturalistic philosophy.

Most discussion of value from a naturalistic viewpoint has been highly general and abstract: concerned with maintaining the relativity of standards as opposed to absolutism; with defining various broad categories, such as intrinsic and instrumental values, and with debating the general epistemological and psychological nature of values and valuation. The discussion of concrete particulars, especially by art critics, has too often been with naïve and dogmatic assumptions and without relation to contemporary movements in philosophy and psychology.

It must be granted, of course, that values are at least a rather peculiar and mysterious kind of facts, not easy to observe or describe with confidence. But, as the previous chapters have tried to show, there are many phenomena related to aesthetic value which can be studied in a more descriptive spirit than they have been in the past. In regard to the process of valuation itself, aesthetics can at least try to observe in more detail how actual difficulties are met and dealt with in making choices and appraisals of works of art. These difficulties will probably not often be felt or stated in the technical terms of the value theorist. He may not recognize some of them as having much to do with his classical problems of "fundamental value." But some attention to them will at least throw light on issues of practical importance, and possibly on the deeper theoretical ones as well. He may be able, also, to help restate confused critical controversies in clearer psychological terms, and to suggest intelligent ways of proceeding with them.

2. *Enjoying and criticizing*

One fact that must appear to any careful observer is the great variety of difficulties encountered. Their differences are commonly ignored in theory, and all are indicated by some such vague expression as "the problem of appreciation" or "the problem of aesthetic value."

First of all, it should be clearly recognized that some experiences of art involve no felt difficulty at all. A person can listen to a piece of music as he would drink a glass of wine or breathe the air of a spring morning—with no effort, problem, or reasoning of any sort. One may be simply sensing the object casually, or perceiving it fully but unemotionally, or perceiving it with emotion, or giving partial attention to it and dreaming of something else. One may be enjoying it, suffering, or being bored. One may habitually prize or cherish a thing as a much-loved possession and yet feel no call to appraise, criticize, or otherwise reason about it.

In other cases there may be a felt difficulty in perceiving clearly, especially where the object is complex or unfamiliar. How this sort of difficulty can be dealt with we have considered in the chapter on form; it does not involve, necessarily, any element of conscious appraisal or inference.

Other difficulties may arise in adjusting the still more complex responses accompanying perception. We may wonder what a certain painted form represents, and gradually recognize its meaning through comparison with remembered images of similar objects. We may feel a conflict in emotional response; if, for example, the music of a song affects us in one way, the words in another. As noted above, such a conflict may not be soluble if due to the nature of the form; or we may adjust it by perceiving a higher unity if one exists, or by trying to ignore the words and listen only to the music.

We may feel a conflict between the present direct experience and a remembered or imagined one. For example, at one concert, or in looking at a picture we have bought, we may wonder if we should have enjoyed another one more. Such a difficulty may involve no rational appraisal: it may be adjusted simply by trying to imagine the alternative in question more vividly, until one or the other is able to call out a response of decisive intensity. If some particular image is habitually brought to mind and compared with present objects, it is sometimes called an ideal or standard of value. Thus in the mind of a doubtful lover, the image of some pictured beauty may help decide his present feelings. The memory of some Greek statue may help a modern sculptor to decide how to pose an arm, or a modern critic to decide whether he likes the new statue when it is finished. These difficulties may be brought to a level of conscious analysis and reasoning, or they may be settled simply by

visualizing alternatives and letting the resultant impulses adjust themselves.

In the chapter on form we noted also the additional difficulties that arise in the use of words, and the possibility of an experimental attitude in verbal criticism.

3. Analyzing an aesthetic situation

Any but the most naïve of critics will realize that his feeling and criticism depend in part on his own personality. Any but the most dogmatic will desire in certain important cases to be especially fair and impartial; to guard against possible prejudice and other factors that might distort his judgment. If he is not interested in explicit judgments, he may at least be curious to understand more clearly the whole relationship between himself and the object: just how it affects him, and why in that particular way. "This Wagner opera," he may say, "is boresome and heavy to me, but some people enthuse over it. I am not going to be awed by authority and try to convince myself that I like it; but I would like to know what it is in myself, and what in the opera, that don't get along together."

Such a desire to understand a relationship would not be gratified by an intensive analysis of the form alone, or of one's own nature apart from the form. Attention might divide itself about evenly between self and object. It is unlikely that in practice one would wish to carry either line of analysis into the amount of detail that we have considered in the last two chapters. There the interest was a scientific one, in working toward generalizations. Here we are considering a difficulty that is purely practical and local: a desire for light on the components of a particularly puzzling situation.

Any consequent reflection will be likely to go a little way toward form-analysis, and a little way toward self-analysis, without much, if any, attempt to distinguish between the two lines of inquiry. Is it the orchestra, the singing, or the acting that bothers me most? The number of things to keep track of at once? The long drawn-out monologues? Am I perhaps listening in the wrong way, straining too hard to recognize each *leit-motiv,* or to understand every German word? Have I become so used to Italian opera that I listen for obvious tunes, and am disappointed not to hear them? Such questioning can go on until one strikes a reason or combination of

reasons that seems adequate, or until one loses interest in the problem. If the importance of the case seemed to warrant it, one could go indefinitely far along both lines of analysis.

By far the greater part of our mental workings cannot possibly be brought to consciousness by our own unaided efforts, as psychoanalysis has abundantly demonstrated. Fundamentally, one's response to a work of art as to anything else is determined by the long history of habit formation stretching back into infancy, whose cumulative steps cannot be consciously remembered. One's most intense fascinations and repulsions may be caused by some long-forgotten shock, or the habitual repression of a strong tendency. Many of the customary standards of one's social group, moreover, are so much taken for granted as to be unconscious and not recognizable as distinct factors in motivation. But to some extent it is possible for anyone to bring into consciousness motives which are near its threshold, especially by reading about or observing such motives in others, or noticing marked differences between their preferences and his.

It is usually not difficult to recognize major peculiarities in one's physical condition which may affect aesthetic responses. These may be basic, like color-blindness or tone-deafness; or transitory, like a headache or the fatigue and satiety caused by overstimulation of one set of nerves. A person who has heard a brass band practicing in the next room all day would do well to take the fact into account if he has to hear and criticize a band concert that evening.

Granted a genuine desire for intellectual honesty, it is sometimes possible to make oneself admit that one's valuation of a work of art has been influenced by extraneous associations. The artist, or someone who has praised or attacked his work, may be a friend or relative, or an enemy. Some pleasant or unpleasant experience may have happened to one in connection with the present object, with a similar one, or even with something suggesting a detail in this one. Oftentimes a vague but strong emotion toward an object is due to such a memory, halfway or altogether buried: a dance tune, a perfume, a pictured garment will convey some poignant but unidentifiable association. A strong dislike for a color or pattern may be due to the fact that it was in the wallpaper of a sickroom during an illness long ago. Sometimes these associations can be recaptured by effort, and sometimes not; but they can at least be recognized as

factors in one's own personality, and not in the work of art one is criticizing.

By frank self-analysis one can also, at times, come face to face with some other unrealized cause of an aesthetic judgment. Perhaps it is due to a desire to win approval through showing one's up-to-date tastes; through appearing erudite, radical, or conservative. Perhaps it is due to an excessive respect for some authority on the subject, whose positive attitude is making one repress a feeling inconsistent with it. Perhaps one has publicly expressed a strong opinion about an artist, in a way identifying oneself with that attitude, and hesitates to admit a change of mind. One's judgment has perhaps been a perfunctory deduction from some supposed law or standard of good art rather than an expression of one's actual feelings. Some associated belief or bit of knowledge is perhaps being confused with the direct appeal of the object as it stands—that the work is by a famous artist; has had a romantic history; was a great step in advance for its time; was much influenced by some other work; is said to have been retouched or copied. All these points may be relevant to a comprehensive account or valuation of the object; but it is confusion of thinking to mistake them for directly perceivable qualities of form. A good way to clarify a situation of this sort is to ask oneself whether one's feeling and judgment would be affected by incontrovertible proof that the object is of a much later (or earlier) date than it is supposed to be. As a general practice, one can guard against the confusion by criticizing works of art without knowing the name or date of the artist; by listening to music before consulting the program; by judging pictures before looking at the labels underneath.

Still another variety of confusion in direct criticism arises from introducing speculations in regard to the object's future and indirect effects. What effect would it have on a person to keep on exposing himself to this sort of art? Would it improve his morals or his general culture? Is this a rather trivial, ephemeral piece of work (such as a popular tune, an amusing short story, or a bit of journalistic cleverness) of which one would grow tired if forced to hear or read it many times? Once more, these are important questions in themselves. But clarity of thinking would consist in considering them as fairly distinct from an estimate of the object's present direct

appeal; confusion would consist in mistaking answers to them for the direct response and criticism.

These suggestions for self-examination are not given with the implication that all art criticism should be so careful and analytic. Quick snap judgments on scanty evidence, with no consciousness of self, are the life of practical enterprise in art criticism as elsewhere. It is not implied, furthermore, that if one discovers a certain peculiar motivation or dubious inference behind a judgment, that judgment should forthwith be altered. Certain peculiar preferences, certain habits, faiths, and assumptions, strong emotional associations, one may accept as integral parts of one's character. Their dictates in aesthetic judgment will then be upheld even when consciously recognized. Everyone has such peculiarities; there is no such thing as a completely objective valuation of a work of art.

But from a practical standpoint, a desire for greater care in appraising immediate values may be achieved through a combination of form-analysis and self-analysis. The former can help the individual to be more confident that he is judging the work of art itself as a whole, and not some fragment of it, or some associated fancy. The latter can help him to be more confident that his response represents the more basic and permanent elements in his character, and not merely a transitory mood or caprice, or a single mistaken inference. By comparing his judgment with those of others, he can further discover the extent to which it is in accord with the consensus of social experience. If he then still reaffirms his first judgment, it will be a more conscious and tested one, and less a product of blind impulse.

4. Predicting future aesthetic values

If one is considering the purchase of a picture, the essential, felt difficulty is likely to be not "How do I like it at this moment?" but "How will I like it month after month, on a wall in my home?" If one has just heard a piano composition played and is wondering whether to learn it, the question will be, "Is it of sufficient lasting value to justify the effort it will take?" These questions need not bring in any outside, nonaesthetic considerations, like the effect on one's professional career. They may require simply the foreseeing

of a whole series of direct aesthetic situations more or less like the present one; of whether the object is going to "wear well," to gain or lose in appeal through repeated experience.

Such a question can be answered only in the light of past experience with similar objects. I (or someone else whose tastes I believe similar to mine) have had fairly extended contacts with this sort of art, and have found that it "grows on one"; or, on the contrary, that it becomes rapidly tiresome.

A person's ability to predict his own future responses will increase about in proportion as he has made more careful study of various forms and of his own past responses to each. Then a newly presented work will be swiftly recognized as belonging to a certain form type, or as a combination of several types. This recalls the responses made to such types, and he predicts accordingly for the present case. In a simple way, this mental process occurs whenever we select a dinner from a restaurant bill of fare. Any generalization, conscious or unconscious, about the tendency of a certain form type to produce a certain effect can operate as a standard of value. One can act in accordance with it even if one's present feelings are no help in deciding. A person fatigued from visiting many picture shops, to the point where he enjoyed nothing, might still be able to recognize that at last he had found a picture of the type he had always liked, and thus predict what his feelings would be when rested.

The obvious danger here, as usual, is habit-fixation. No one but a person of extremely narrow, set habits could predict with any approach to certainty his future responses to all sorts of art. But, on the other hand, no one has time to keep experimenting with all possibilities indefinitely. The middle course is to hold fast to that which one has found best, and give most attention to it, while always moderately receptive to unrealized possibilities in other things.

To those unrealized possibilities the experience of others is an ever-suggestive guide. One can be independent to a common-sense degree, accepting no current standards and nobody's judgment as final, and yet devote a little extra effort to the things which are praised by people one respects. The acquirement of tastes by effort, from the proverbial olives to Matisse and Stravinsky, is a necessary phase of aesthetic growth. It is usually guided, if not by popular standards, at least by the praise of critics and particular groups, radical or conservative, with whom one feels in accord. That accord-

ance is itself a thing which can be accepted blindly, or tested through repeated comparison of judgments.

When no such mutual understanding exists, caution and independence in using a recommendation from someone else would show itself in a demand for more objective details to support the recommendation. An undiscriminating person will simply ask a librarian for "a good story," or accept a ticket agency's prediction that "you'll enjoy this play." A discriminating reader is likely to pay more heed to a review containing some descriptive analysis than to one which gives only broad appraisals or accounts of what the reviewer thinks and feels about the book in question. With a fairly objective summary of the book in hand, the reader can predict on the basis of his past experience whether he would be likely to find it worth-while reading, and in just what way. If he then reads the book, and is consistently experimental, he will be open to unexpected effects from it, and ready to alter his general standards accordingly.

These general standards may remain in his mind purely relative to himself, with no claim for universal validity. They are generalizations on how certain kinds of art have in the past affected him. Kept tentative and flexible, they will not mechanize his choices. Together with suggestions from other persons, they can be the means of saving the time and trouble which excessive, indiscriminate experimentation with every presented alternative would cost, and of guiding him directly to the most promising possibilities.

5. Nonaesthetic values of art

Situations often arise where the important thing to be decided about a work of art is not its direct aesthetic effect, present or future, but its effects along other lines. For example, in time of war persons in authority may be interested in having music written that will stimulate a martial spirit in soldiers; in having posters designed that will encourage patriotism and enlistment; in suppressing literature that will cause friendliness toward a hostile country. In primitive times, masks and helmets were designed to frighten the enemy.

It is a familiar fact that religious motives, also, have entered into the creation and appraisal of art. Much interest in form for its own sake has no doubt gone into the making of religious art, but at the

same time an effort has been made to have the architecture, the stained glass, robes, incense, and music such as would conduce to a mood of piety and worship. The moral consequences of art, too, have been of vital interest: whether the moral effect aimed at is one of harmony and proportion in living, or of rigid asceticism, the desire to censor art not conducive to it is perennial.

A hospital wants music and decorations that will soothe a nervous patient and cheer the depressed. A social climber wants paintings and furnishings that will advance his prestige. An educator wants art study so organized as to contribute interest to other subjects: to represent literary characters and dramatize history. A social philosopher is impressed by the power of art to cross national boundaries and integrate social groups.

This miscellaneous list is enough to indicate the variety of ways of appraising art on grounds other than its direct aesthetic appeal through the experience of form. It suggests the inadequacy of the common antithesis between "art for art's sake" and "art for its moral consequences." Many of the above interests could not be classified as moral consequences, in any precise meaning of the term. The other antitheses between intrinsic and instrumental, immediate and contributory, values are also rather too simple to cover the ground. In time and space, a religious or martial effect may be as "immediate" as the enjoyment of form. We have just observed, moreover, how a work of art can be appraised as an instrument to future aesthetic effects over a long time. Even the word "aesthetic" or "appreciative" covers a multitude of different ways of experiencing art. If we adopt a broad definition of "aesthetic" as including any "consummatory" moment in experience, any work done for its own sake, it will take in many interests and activities other than the enjoyment of artistic forms. However, a rough practical distinction can perhaps be drawn between those interests concerned more with direct perceptive and emotional responses to a form, and those concerned with other, more heterogeneous consequences, ramifying outward into activities not usually associated with art.

To trace the consequences of a type of art into these remoter fields would lead the aesthetician far beyond any limits which could reasonably be set for his subject. He would soon find himself involved in politics, theology, medicine, general education, or some other subject, demanding a knowledge of its own distinctive con-

ditions, ends, and means. So broad a question as whether art should be appraised "for art's sake," or on some other ground, is itself a question not to be settled within aesthetics alone, since it involves the adjustment of many diverse social interests. The aesthetician will be rendering a sufficient service if he can throw some light on the ways in which art can be appraised for its own sake, and to that end he could afford to let still more complex questions alone for the present. By merely distinguishing these issues within the field of art criticism, where they are sadly confused, and showing how one line of thought can be followed up without dragging in irrelevant considerations, he will make it easier to deal with each of them in its turn.

Another contribution he can make to these broader problems is a set of clearer conceptions of various types of form. Then, if a question arises about the effects of some kind of art in another field, the workers in that field will at least have a more definite notion of what they are to observe in action. When the question is now raised of the effect of "indecent" art on morality, everything from Greek statuary to the Bible and Shakespeare is usually brought into the controversy, with no impartial attempt at differentiating between an idealized representation of nudity, primitive frankness, sophisticated decadence, naturalism of the Zola type, erotic sentimentality, crude pornography, and the many other fairly distinguishable types, vaguely grouped together in the popular mind as "indecent." A first step toward intelligent thinking, if different kinds of art are involved, would be to consider their consequences separately, in addition to whatever common effects they may possibly have. The aesthetician could also render a service to public discussion by stressing the relativity of all effects in art to the personality of the appreciator. He could suggest that if any hypothetical generalizations are to be made, they should be made with reference to specified age or other groups, and to the various possible ways of experiencing a given form.

6. Revising social standards

The movement called "relativism" in ethics and aesthetics is still to a large extent negative and destructive in emphasis. It is forced to devote the greater part of its energies to combating absolutism, the belief in fixed universal rules and standards of moral and artistic

value. Through centuries of philosophical argument, supported by theology and by the natural human tendency to fixed habits and customs, the latter has become so deeply ingrained in theory and practice that it is not to be destroyed in a day. There will long be need of repeated attack upon its speciously impressive arguments, and for protest against its cramping influence in almost every field of thinking and conduct. Under these conditions relativistic theory has wisely emphasized the danger of deciding problems of valuation by appeal to any general standards, and has urged instead that each problem be dealt with afresh, in its own terms, by intelligent analysis of the special conditions involved in it. With regard to aesthetic and moral theory, it has stressed the point that social conditions are too changeable, aims and interests too diverse, every situation too different from any other, to permit of general formulas for valuation.

As usually happens with a moderate view, relativism has been carried to extremes by certain writers. They have construed it as implying a complete anarchy and utter disparity of values, a Sophistic individualism which declares each case to be entirely unique and without precedent in the history of man. No individual's experience is like any other's; no aesthetic moment is comparable to any other; valuation is merely expressing how one feels toward a thing at a particular instant; no general principles can be of the slightest validity from one case to another.

Although it is hard to disprove such views in theory, no one would dream of trying to live up to them in practice, not even their most ardent supporters. Life is too short to analyze and decide every problem from the ground up, and no sane person disregards entirely the testimony of past experience in art or other activities. As mentioned in a previous chapter, neither works of art, responses to them, individual tastes, nor problems of appraisal are by any means unique; each is a little different from every other, but common factors recur. Upon this fact rests all continuity of individual action, and all possibility of communicating ideas and preferences. General standards of value are, and always must be, used by everyone as a means of bringing to bear the past experience of himself and others.

In so far as relativistic theory seems to ignore their necessity, and to disparage all use of them, it loses touch with facts and urges the

impossible. It surrenders the field not only to blind impulse but to absolutism itself. The believers in absolutism have been active in working out principles which, though often excessively restrictive and based on false premises, have had much accumulated wisdom in them, and have performed a useful service in co-ordinating creative and critical effort. Unless relativism can contribute some positive aid in the use of standards, people will go on employing the old methods *faute de mieux,* and rushing when expedient to the other extreme of admitting no standards at all.

Is there any way, consistent with a naturalistic philosophy, by which aesthetics can develop reliable standards of value? Certainly it cannot be done in a spirit of coercion, through the attempt to establish external rules as binding, through telling people that they ought to like what they do not, through ignoring the variability of conditions and interests in art. In a purely descriptive spirit, however, a line of research is open to aesthetics which cannot fail to throw light upon the problem. Many of the necessary steps have been outlined in previous chapters; it remains to link them together with explicit reference to standards of value.

Recognizing at the start that human nature and conditions vary from time to time and person to person, it is possible for aesthetics to inquire, with reference to specific factors, how much they vary. Through systematic comparison of responses to identical forms and types of form, it can try to estimate in each case how much uniformity and how much diversity exist. It can further try to correlate the diversities with accompanying factors, such as age, environment, education, vocation, special training in art, and the like. It can take note of what changes in response occur, and seek to correlate these changes with accompanying factors, such as the passage from childhood to adolescence and maturity, and the following of courses of training in the appreciation of art. By carrying such observations over extended periods, it can develop a new type of history: the history of the effects of certain works and types of art on persons who have experienced them; both the immediate effects and the long-run, cumulative effects. All this, it should be clear, involves no assumption whatever about what sorts of art are best, or best for any sort of person. It does not imply the assumption that the most

popular art is the best, or that by taking a vote one can determine values; it does not attempt to reduce values to a common denominator.

It would aim at limited descriptive generalizations of the following order: *that a certain kind of form tends to produce a certain kind of effect in persons of a certain kind under certain conditions.* Obviously, any such estimates would have to be extremely modest and tentative. They would have to recognize the constant danger of oversimplifying through ignoring negative instances, and the difficulty of discovering the specific nature of a response, by verbal or other means. At the start, they would have to be restricted to the persons and objects actually examined, without the presumption of their validity for others. But with increasing numbers of cases over longer periods of time, including diverse and unselected groups, and with a refinement of technique to guard against errors, correlations could be rendered increasingly reliable in this as in any other inductive research. Stronger and stronger presumptive evidence would develop of their holding for cases other than those actually examined.

If the work had to be done entirely by induction, it would indeed be a hopelessly intricate task to correlate four or more variables, each so complex and subtle in itself. But here again the deductive phase of scientific method can be brought into play. Aesthetic theory and art criticism are full of generalizations about the values of certain types of art. Instead of trying to build new ones from the ground up, the experimenter can devote most of his energy to testing those already formulated. Without presupposition as to their truth, he can observe how they actually work in guiding valuation: to what particular judgments, preferences, orders of merit, creative enterprises, approvals and disapprovals they have led in the practice and theory of art.[1] The judgments and procedures thus deductively arrived at he can compare with the more spontaneous ones observed elsewhere.

Many current generalizations he will find stated in extremely sweeping and dogmatic form, as statements of the qualities an object must have to be beautiful, or as necessary rules of composition. Instead of throwing these aside as false, he will realize that each is

[1] For a presentation of this method from an ethical viewpoint, see the author's essay "The Verification of Standards of Value," *The Journal of Philosophy* (May, 1922).

probably a significant summary of the long experience of some group of persons. He will therefore pay careful attention to the qualities or methods specified, and try to find in each case to what consequences they lead, and what particular kind of value is attainable along those lines.

Standards expressed in general aesthetics are apt to be extremely vague when stated in the abstract. What are the particular consequences, one might ask, of saying that beauty of form consists in uniformity within multiplicity? Hardly any work of art ever made, good, bad, or indifferent, is excluded from such a formula. Even a natural object has some variety of parts, and some unifying principle that holds it together; otherwise we could not recognize it as a single object. By culling such formulas from aesthetic theory and arguing them in the abstract one gets nowhere. But look further in the discussion of each writer who employs them, and it will usually appear that he has something more definite in mind. By uniformity in multiplicity, he means certain kinds of uniformity in multiplicity. He may or may not describe them definitely, but they will nevertheless appear from his particular illustrative appraisals. To Santayana this standard implies a specific judgment on the heroic couplet, on the Greek colonnade, and on Walt Whitman's poetry.[2] How vague and meaningless is Tolstoy's doctrine that art is to be judged by its moral effects when that doctrine is detached from its context; how sharply significant as a tool of valuation when he goes on to arrange works of art in orders of merit according to it. It is for the aesthetician to note, summarize, and compare such particular applications of each standard by each man who uses it.

Manuals of craftsmanship and composition in the arts are full of rules of procedure, somewhat narrower in scope and therefore easier to study as to their practical consequences. Academic books on harmony, for example, tell the music student that parallel fifths are wrong, and that a dominant chord must not be followed by a subdominant. The absolutistic mind accepts such rules as necessary principles of good art; the radical derides them as obsolete fetishes. An experimental course would be to ask just what peculiar effects parallel fifths tend to produce on the hearer. How do they sound when played alone on a piano? Rather flat and empty, perhaps. How do they sound when tried in this and that chord progression? How

[2] *The Sense of Beauty,* p. 108f.

are they used by some moderns to fit into a general scheme, and what sort of atmosphere results? Are they perhaps good for certain effects, but incompatible with the effects aimed at by classical music?

In the same spirit one could study each rule of academic painting; about balance, good modeling, graceful arrangement of drapery, and so on; each rule of conventional rhetoric about good sentence structure, plot, and versification; each principle of good art laid down by every age and school. What works of art and form types does it tend to value most highly, what to condemn? What are the peculiar effects of each rule and of each type of form? In what total aims may each be a co-operating or a frustrating part?

Practical conduct in the arts makes constant use of generalizations on the effects of certain types of art, both on the general public and on specified kinds of persons. These function as standards of value in that a given case is identified as belonging to a certain type, and thereby judged as to its probable conduciveness to a special effect desired. Libraries have lists of boys' books and of girls' books which work fairly well on the whole, although an exceptional child will reject the whole list, and although many children will occasionally want a different type of book. Orchestra directors know that an all-Beethoven program is for a certain kind of audience, and a program of light opera medleys and cornet solos for another. Book publishers and theatrical producers often make mistakes, but they make their living by predicting correctly on the whole. This applies not only to what the masses will like, but to what certain élite groups will like, and in what ways. In large cities plays are produced and pictures painted to appeal to small cultivated minorities: even the editor of a radical art magazine can guess what sort of illustrations, verse, and criticism his readers will demand. Certain artists and works of art are known to have an almost universal, many-sided appeal to all groups and all artistic interests; others are associated with rare special types of personality and training.

It is for aesthetics to state clearly and further verify these hypotheses, and to analyze them into more definite correlations of formal and psychic factors. A necessary phase of this will be the analysis of such expressions as "good," "beautiful," "valuable," "like," and "dislike" into the countless different feelings and modes of valuation which they vaguely indicate. The result will be no single definition of "beauty" or standard of aesthetic value. Aesthetics inherits from Platonism an exaggerated respect for the im-

portance of this and similar very broad and "fundamental" words. It is dissatisfied with any standard which is not couched as a brief absolute definition of beauty or goodness, for all persons at all times. No such standard can ever be workable in practice, or in theory based on modern science. Aesthetics must abandon this ancient craving for a monistic solution if it is to function in a world increasingly conscious of the plurality and relativity of things.

The terms "good" and "beautiful" are less and less used in the criticism of art, just as "true," their partner in the classical trinity, is vanishing from scientific discussion. They are used chiefly in casual conversation, as in remarking "What a beautiful day!" or in indicating a general attitude of approval or enjoyment when one is unable or indisposed to analyze the situation more exactly. Their breadth is that of vagueness, and they are too ambiguous to function effectively as tools for explaining phenomena or directing choice. Their continued use in aesthetics goes along with a tendency to oversimplify facts by reducing them to single concepts, and to substitute the thrills of word-magic for clarity of thinking.

In their place, and in that of all absolute standards and ultimate ends, will come more distinct *hypotheses about the effects of certain types of form in direct appreciation, and in such remoter fields as it is found worth while to trace them.* Such hypotheses will operate in valuation as tentative guides in predicting the probable effects of a case identified as belonging to the type specified.

What binding force, as a standard, would a generalization of this sort have on any individual who chose to differ from it? None whatever as a moral obligation, or as a sign that he was necessarily mistaken in judgment or inferior in taste. It would have no more coercive effect than a "law" of hygiene has in making individuals conform to it; rather much less, since the effects predicted would be vastly more contingent and uncertain. It will always be open to any individual to prove the generalization false, in his case at least; and if he succeeds, the aesthetician must alter it accordingly. The more adventurous among artists will be likely to regard any such theory (as they now regard academic rules) as a challenge to do what has never been done before, with effects other than might have been expected. The adventurer in appreciation will regard it as a challenge to show that the potential effects of some kind of art have never been fully grasped or properly expressed. Such minds are the pioneers in aesthetic experience, as political reformers are in the art

of government, and it is the duty of theory not to dictate but to observe and explain their achievements.

To be most effective, however, experimentation must be with one thing or a few things at a time; not in all directions indiscriminately. Whatever past experience indicates as to certain fairly regular, dependable factors is taken for granted, temporarily at least, and used as a stable basis for trying new variations of other factors. Knowledge of traditional forms and techniques, and an intuitive grasp of their probable effects on the appreciator, have been of vital assistance to the most original artists. Whatever aesthetics can do toward making this knowledge more reliable and accessible can, if experimentally used, be an aid to original creation and criticism.

7. Control and aesthetic experience

That science aims at control of nature, including human nature, does not imply that it must also aim at universal mechanization. For insuring the necessities and comforts of life, large-scale mechanical production is an effective means, and science has therefore developed it. For attaining ideal values, radically different means may be necessary, and intelligent control will then consist in their discovery and application.

Aesthetics is not identical with the aesthetic experience which it studies, and it can aim at a scientific attitude without proposing that the latter should follow its example. Logical analysis and observation of the regularities in aesthetic experience are necessary to scientific understanding. But that is not to say that the creation and enjoyment of art should be more uniform, logical, or analytic than in the past. If aesthetics discovers limits beyond which life cannot be made systematic without destroying elements of value within it, then intelligent control will consist in holding system within those limits, and in stimulating variety, surprise, and unanalyzed feeling outside of them. As in government, the attaining of genuine freedom can be the chief aim of scientific planning. Control through applied aesthetics can aim, likewise, not at directing the courses of intuitive impulse, but at freeing it to seek its own paths of adventure and growth, by harmonizing unwanted conflicts and dissolving the routines of mechanical habit.

II

AESTHETICS AS A SCIENCE: ITS DEVELOPMENT IN EUROPE AND AMERICA*

1. Can aesthetics be a science? Criteria of scientific status

There has been much argument as to whether aesthetics is a science, or can ever become one. The answer depends, first, on what we include within the field of aesthetics; and, second, on the definition of "science" we accept. There are several correct ones, according to the dictionaries.

In the narrow sense, which emphasizes exact *measurement,* aesthetics is not a science and will not become so in the near future. A small amount of measurement is being done in aesthetics, of works of art and related psychological phenomena. Works of art can be measured in some respects with considerable accuracy: for example, as to the dimensions of buildings and vases, the shape and placing of lines in a picture, the sequences of rhythmic and pitch variations in music.[1] Overt behavior can be statistically measured, as in votes of preference or other expressions of opinion, and in popular demand for this or that kind of art.[2] But many deeper phases of art and aesthetic experience—e.g., the specific emotional suggestiveness

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[1] Vitruvius, *De Architectura,* Bk. III. G. D. Birkhoff, *Aesthetic Measure* (Cambridge, Mass., 1933). J. Hambidge, *Dynamic Symmetry in Composition* (Cambridge, Mass., 1923). J. Schillinger, *The Schillinger System of Musical Composition* (New York, 1941).

[2] P. R. Farnsworth, J. C. Trembley, and C. E. Dutton, "Masculinity and Femininity of Musical Phenomena," *J.A.A.C.,* IX:3 (March, 1951).

of music, painting, and poetry—are far too complex and variable to be measured accurately at present. The scope for significant measurement in aesthetics is gradually increasing, and will continue to increase. But there is much spadework to be done in the preliminary grouping, analysis, and interpretation of phenomena before exact methods will be of major importance.

Exact quantitative laws and formulas are seldom attained outside the realm of physical science. Economics uses them increasingly; anthropology and political science, comparatively little. Even in biology, where exact methods have grown considerably since Mendel, there is a great deal of important knowledge which cannot be stated in precise quantitative terms. Croce is right in charging that "the inductive aestheticians have not yet discovered one single law." But "laws" in the old-fashioned, absolutistic sense of invariable uniformities in nature are scarcer than we used to think, even in the physical sciences. Instead, the scientist now talks rather in terms of averages, correlations, and trends. These emerge gradually out of the multiplicity of data in all realms. We do not measure them exactly, all at once, but gradually refine our quantitative estimates.

It is misleading to restrict the concept of science to fields where measurement is highly developed, as many physical scientists insist on doing. It seems to relegate all investigation of mental and cultural phenomena to the outer darkness of mere guesswork. It obscures the important relative differences, in *degree* of development along scientific lines, between various fields of investigation. It obscures the important fact that, even where measurement is not yet possible, great advances can be made away from primitive thinking toward controlled observation and logical inference. The mathematical and physical sciences made such advances over two thousand years ago, very slowly and gradually, and are still not free from traces of wishful thinking, or from thinking in terms of a local culture pattern. Other subjects, now trying to make them, should not be discouraged by the supercilious pronouncement that it never can be done. A more constructive view of science is to regard it as a way of thinking which is being gradually developed in one field of phenomena after another. In deciding on the extent to which a subject has become scientific, we should judge not only by its conclusions—laws, formulas, descriptions of fact—but also by its aims and methods of reasoning.

Coming back to the question "Can aesthetics become a science?" the answer is definitely "yes"—in the broad sense wherein science is defined by Webster as "A branch of study which is concerned with observation and classification of facts, esp. with the establishment . . . of verifiable general laws, chiefly by induction and hypotheses; as, the biological, historical, and mathematical sciences. Specif., accumulated and accepted knowledge which has been systematized and formulated with reference to the discovery of general truths or the operation of general laws." This definition leaves room for subjects which do not, at present, formulate quantitative laws, or indeed any laws. Certainly the historical and social sciences do not on any large scale. They establish particular events, general tendencies, causal connections, but not laws of the Newtonian type. Their claim to scientific status lies rather in their spirit of objective, impartial inquiry, and in their systematic effort to control observation and inference by logical standards. Aesthetics is already fairly scientific in these respects, and becoming steadily more so. It is a natural science, in the sense that man and all his works, including art, are phenomena of nature. In the narrower sense, in which man is contrasted with physical nature, it is a humanistic and cultural science like psychology and sociology.

If, however, aesthetics is understood in the old, purely normative way as a subject which attempts to set up universal laws of beauty and good taste which shall be binding on all individuals, and to prove that we ought to admire one kind of art rather than another, then indeed aesthetics cannot become a science, or even a progressive branch of philosophy. From the standpoint of naturalistic science, it is attempting the impossible. The only "laws" it should try to establish are flexible, tentative descriptions of observed recurrent patterns in aesthetic phenomena, such as the tendency of certain kinds of art to produce certain effects on certain kinds of person, under certain conditions.

Some authorities emphasize *prediction* and *control* as criteria of scientific status. Prediction is far advanced in astronomy; control is almost nonexistent there, by the nature of the facts. (Indirectly, as through the calendar, astronomy does help us in controlling human affairs; but the stars and planets so far elude our influence—fortunately, perhaps.) In history and anthropology there is little attempt at either prediction or control. In dealing with the arts, however, a

large amount of rough, informal prediction and control is already exercised. Book and magazine publishers, theater and film producers, concert bureaus—all these often make mistakes, but on the whole they make their living by guessing correctly as to what people of different kinds will like enough to pay for, in the realm of art. Educational experiment with the use of different kinds of art is constantly increasing our understanding of what effects each type will have on the thoughts, emotions, and abilities of different types and ages of student. Organized religion and government have used art since prehistoric times to influence the feelings, thoughts, and actions of the public. Greater understanding of the psychological means of such control leads to greater power in exercising it. The results of such practical observation and experiment do not often get into textbooks on aesthetics; they are more likely to appear in a book on the psychology of advertising. Such dissociation among the various approaches to understanding the arts is characteristic of this transitional period.

There is no reason why science should limit its experimental study of control through art to the often trivial concerns of advertising and the often harmful aims of political propaganda. It can examine the power of art to produce any kind of effect, desired or undesired; individual or social; aesthetic or practical; sensuous, emotional, intellectual, or spiritual.[3] It can study the effects of varying any type of artistic stimulus in relation to the other variable factors concerned.

There are many ways in which prediction, or estimate of probability, is becoming an important task of aesthetics. Some are concerned with *appreciation,* taste, preference, enjoyment, liking, and so on. The problem may concern a particular individual at a particular time: what will be his response to a particular work of art? It may be hard or impossible to predict it, because of the many variable factors (e.g., transitory moods and attitudes) within him which are inaccessible to view. If the problem concerns a large group of persons belonging to a well-defined type, over a long period of time, prediction becomes more dependable, as in actuarial science; the minor variations and momentary deviations cancel out.

[3] T. Munro, "Knowledge and Control in the Field of Aesthetics," *J.A.A.C.,* I:1 (Spring, 1941); I. L. Frank, "The Integrative Role of the Arts in Personality," *Eastern Arts Association Yearbook* (1950), p. 17.

Another type of prediction in aesthetics is concerned with the *production* of art. What types of art will be produced in the near and far future? Here again it is hard to tell in a particular case: what kind of picture will a certain boy draw tomorrow, if left to himself? One can predict only in certain general characteristics normal to his age level, etc. The larger inquiry takes us into the realm of art history, of styles and style trends. We are just beginning to discern the main outlines of the past history of styles in each art, and in art as a whole: the broad inclusive trends, such as the alternation of classic and romantic, Apollonian and Dionysian, throughout the world. As we learn to plot the curves of past and recent tendencies, we naturally speculate about the future: can one prolong or project a certain curve into the next quarter-century? Will a certain basic cycle recur, as it has many times before? Similar questions arise in economics and other social sciences. One is never quite sure—unforeseen factors may break in—but the margin of error is progressively reduced. Already, in art, there is a great deal of trained guesswork as to future trends in production: especially in the realm of fashions in clothing. Science can gradually increase their dependability. Trends in production and in taste or appreciation are of course intimately connected: each influences the other; they never diverge very far.

We owe largely to Auguste Comte the idea that the sciences develop in a certain order, the earlier ones providing necessary means or foundations for the later ones. Mathematics, he pointed out, first entered the "positive" stage; then astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, sociology. The advance has been from simple to complex: the earlier sciences describing the world in respect to a few comparatively simple and constant characteristics such as number, magnitude, and mass; the later ones describing more and more complex and variable phenomena such as those of human society. Each science presupposes its predecessors. Comte did not envisage psychology as a special science, but divided its phenomena between biology and sociology. His theory was incorrect in some respects, but on the whole it has been confirmed by later events. Mathematics employs logic. The physical sciences depend to a large extent on mathematics. Biology, which made a decisive step toward science in the eighteenth century with the logical classifications of Linnaeus, Cuvier, and others, now uses mathematics and chemistry to an increasing extent.

The social sciences, which advanced toward scientific status in the early nineteenth century, use the concept of evolution and other tools derived from the biological, physical, and mathematical sciences. Next to achieve scientific status was psychology, formerly "the philosophy of mind," which adopted experimental methods in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, through the efforts of such men as Helmholtz, Fechner, Wundt, and William James. Their observation was partly in the laboratory, partly clinical (as in the case of Charcot and Freud), partly in the outside world of human behavior. It was heavily indebted to previous biological work on the anatomy, physiology, and pathology of the brain and nervous system. Psychology is still learning how to make use of the social sciences, such as anthropology, with their information on the varieties of psychic phenomena in different cultures.

These general facts about the history of science apply significantly to the present situation in aesthetics. No subject can become a full-fledged science until the prerequisites have been provided by the older sciences. Before then, it may have individual pioneer steps, brilliant anticipations, but no concerted, systematic procedure along scientific lines. Attempts to introduce the latter before the prerequisites are available will be premature and disappointing. This occurred in aesthetics in 1876, when Fechner tried to introduce laboratory measurement. He did not then succeed in making aesthetics scientific, because the chief prerequisites were not yet in existence. Without them, the central phenomena of art and aesthetic experience were inaccessible and mysterious. Indirectly, Fechner helped to provide the necessary tools; through helping to establish the new, experimental psychology, he did much to lay the foundation for scientific aesthetics in the twentieth century.

2. *Development of the prerequisites for scientific aesthetics*

To an extent not commonly realized, the necessary tools and materials for scientific aesthetics have been developed since 1900. Let us briefly summarize three groups of them.

In the first place, a sufficient amount and variety of *works of art* are now available, to allow generalization about the arts of mankind on a broad scale. For the first time, we now have a fair sampling of the chief art products of all the principal civilizations, nationalities,

and stages of development. There are still large gaps in our knowledge, but we can see world art as a whole in a way impossible as late as 1900. This applies to the visual arts, where our data for comparison include a much wider sampling of oriental, archaic, and primitive arts.[1] This is due in part to archaeological excavation; in part to exploration, travel, commerce, museum techniques, and improved methods of reproduction, as in color prints and casts. It applies to world literature, where improved translations and new editions are now available on a much greater scale. It applies to music, where new phonograph and sound-film recordings are bringing us exotic music such as that of India, Java, and the African tribes, as well as much unfamiliar European music of the Baroque, Renaissance, and Middle Ages.[2]

In the second place, the *social sciences* have co-operated to document these works of art for us historically and culturally: to help us understand them by seeing them, not merely as museum exhibits, but in their cultural setting.[3] They show us the status and functions of art and artist in various times and places. Anthropology and ethnology are showing us the meaning of primitive and oriental arts, in relation to the entire culture pattern in which they were produced, including religious, social, economic, moral, technological, and other factors. Slowly, this approach is being extended to the complex and diversified higher civilizations of east and west.[4]

In the third place, recent *psychology* has given us a general, naturalistic description of human nature; of its physiological basis, its animal origin, its inborn mechanisms, powers, and processes of learning; its cycle of growth and senescence in personality and mental abilities. We are given an account of such basic functions as

[1] F. Boas, *Primitive Art* (Cambridge, Mass., 1927). R. Linton and P. S. Wingert, *Arts of the South Seas* (New York, 1946).

[2] E.g., the phonograph albums *Musik des Orients, African Native Music,* and *L'Anthologie Sonore:* this last with program notes by Curt Sachs.

[3] A. L. Kroeber, *Configurations of Culture Growth* (Berkeley, Calif., 1944) and *Anthropology* (New York, 1923, 1948). P. A. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics* (New York, 1937), Vol.I. L. Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (New York, 1938). M. Mead, "The Role of the Arts in a Culture," *Eastern Arts Association Yearbook* (Kutztown, Pa., 1950), p. 10.

[4] R. Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Boston, 1934) and *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (Boston, 1946). L. Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (New York, 1934).

visual and auditory perception, emotion, and conation. Psychoanalysis and depth psychology have explored the life of fantasy in its conscious and unconscious levels; the nature of emotion and motivation. All these have a direct, obvious bearing on the arts.[5] The processes and mechanisms involved in the creation and appreciation of art are now seen to be not fundamentally unique or separate, but special applications of those which occur in all other main realms of human activity.[6] Before scientific psychology had given us this general framework of human nature, it was impossible for aesthetics to lift itself, by its own bootstraps, into an understanding of art.

In terms of psychology, we can now approach the analysis of aesthetic form in a new and searching way.[7] A painting or statue is not only a physical form, a configuration of molecules; a sonata is not only a succession of sound waves. Each is also an aesthetic form: a stimulus to apperception, which includes the apprehending of complex configurations of presented sensory details and of suggested meanings. Suggested meanings become comparatively objective (or intersubjective) when culturally established, as in the cross as a symbol of Christianity. A work of art also stimulates emotional, conative, and evaluative responses, which are important for study in aesthetic psychology, but which are highly variable from person to person and moment to moment. Hence it is usually advisable to exclude the observer's affective responses from a description of the form of a work of art. Even the apprehension of its meanings or suggestive factors is dependent partly on the observer's previous experience and education. Its powers of stimulation are determined to a large extent by the culture pattern within which the work of art is experienced. A work of art is a vehicle for preserving and transmitting individual and social experience culturally. When the work of art is produced in one culture, and is exported or preserved for observation by another culture, its meanings are certain to change. Thus the description of a work of art in regard to its powers of suggestion requires reference to one or more cultural backgrounds. The analysis of form also involves a study of the sensory and other psychological components in artistic form, such as line, color, pitch, and rhythm. It involves a study of the ways in which

[5] D. Schneider, *Psychoanalysis and the Artist* (New York, 1950).

[6] *Art in American Life and Education* (Bloomington, Ill., 1941), Ch. XXIV.

[7] *Ibid.*, Chs. XXI, XXII, XXIII.

all these diverse components are combined in various arts and mediums to produce the countless variety of individual works of art, and of historic styles. The descriptive analysis of form and style, along this and similar lines, is now called the "morphology of art," or "aesthetic morphology." [8] Stylistic analysis is one type or subdivision of it.

Another psychological approach to the analysis of art seeks to infer the artist's traits of personality, his motives and mental processes, both conscious and unconscious, from observation of his products.[9] Following Freud's analysis of the novel *Gradiva,* and Jung's of myths and mandalas, many such interpretations have been made of literature, painting, and sculpture. Drawings and sculpture by the insane, neurotic, blind, and other types of person have also been psychoanalyzed. The aim may then be therapeutic or educational. Childen's drawings are analyzed to discover their anxieties and personal problems. A subject's behavior toward art—e.g., his comments about a picture—is likewise interpreted as psychological or psychiatric data.[10] Farfetched, unwarranted inferences are sometimes made, but on the whole this approach is throwing much new light on the ways personality expresses itself in art and in responses to art. Critics have had to warn us, however, that such psychoanalyses of the product and its maker do not provide a basis for evaluating it. The insanity of Van Gogh does not imply that his art is necessarily insane or inferior.

Philosophical aesthetics has been slow to accept the contributions of recent psychology. Its attempts at a psychology of art have clung to metaphysical abstractions, of little relevance in explaining actual works of art. There has been a long series of attempts to formulate

[8] G. L. Raymond, *The Genesis of Art Form* (New York, 1892). D. H. Parker, *The Analysis of Art* (New Haven, Conn., 1926), Ch.II. T. Munro, "Form in the Arts: An Outline of Aesthetic Morphology," in this volume, pp. 160ff.; "Style in the Arts: A Method of Stylistic Analysis," *J.A.A.C.,* V:2 (December, 1946), 128–159, and also in this volume, pp. 192ff. H. Hungerland, "Problems of Descriptive Analysis in the Visual Arts," *J.A.A.C.,* IV:1 (September, 1945), 20–25.

[9] L. K. Frank, *Projective Methods* (Springfield, Ill., 1948). V. Löwenfeld, *The Nature of Creative Activity* (New York, 1939). D. Rapaport, *Diagnostic Psychological Testing* (Chicago, 1945). K. Machover, *Personality Projection* (Springfield, Ill., 1949). M. Naumburg, *Schizophrenic Art: its Meaning in Psychotherapy* (New York, 1950).

[10] S. S. Tomkins, *The Thematic Apperception Test* (New York, 1947).

one simple principle for explaining aesthetic phenomena, from "the sense of beauty" to "expression" and "empathy." Some, like "wish-fulfillment," have been taken from other branches of psychology in a detached way, without thorough assimilation of the related materials—in this case, psychoanalytic. The extreme behaviorism of much American psychology has made us timid about other approaches, especially the introspective. There are promising signs of increasing rapprochement between psychology, aesthetics, and the arts; one after another, approaches such as Gestalt, personality diagnosis, and the psychology of learning are applied to aesthetic problems.[11]

With the aid of psychoanalysis and individual psychology, we are now in a position to explore systematically the types of personality found in the world of art, the personalities of artists, and their relation to the kind of art produced; the symbolic meanings of art as an expression of the artist's partly unconscious desires and conflicts; [12] the relation between taste and personality; the factors determining preference in art; the ways in which art is experienced, used, and evaluated by persons of different sex, age levels, and personality types; of different social, educational, economic, religious, and racial groups. The Jungian approach stressing the extrovert-introvert contrast and the inheritance of archetypal concepts is being applied to all phases of art and folklore.[13] Special attention is being given to the art produced and preferred by children of different ages and of different sex, in different mediums; to the development of art abilities and individual types of expression, as related to general

[11] R. M. Ogden, *The Psychology of Art* (New York, 1938). H. E. Rees, *A Psychology of Artistic Creation* (New York, 1942). M. Schoen, "Aesthetic Experience in the Light of Current Psychology," *J.A.A.C.* I:1 (Spring, 1941), 23–33. N. C. Meier, *Art in Human Affairs* (New York, 1942). T. Munro, "Methods in the Psychology of Art," *J.A.A.C.*, VI:3 (March, 1948), 225–235). D. N. Morgan, "Psychology and Art Today: a Summary and Criticism," *J.A.A.C.*, IX:2 (December, 1950), 81.

[12] S. E. Jelliffe and L. Brink, *Psychoanalysis and the Drama* (Washington, 1922). J. Weiss, "A Psychological Theory of Formal Beauty," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, XVI (1947). H. B. Lee, "The Cultural Lag in Aesthetics," *J.A.A.C.*, VI:2 (December, 1947), 120–139.

[13] C. G. Jung, *The Integration of the Personality* (New York, 1939). H. Read, *Education Through Art* (London, 1943). H. Bodkin, *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* (London, 1934).

mental and emotional growth, health, and maladjustment. Methods of education in the arts are being revised in the light of a fuller understanding of child psychology, the factors making for creative imagination, and its value to the child.

Semantics, with its study of words and other signs and meanings, involves an application of psychology and logic to a certain kind of cultural mechanism for the communication and recording of thought. It overlaps aesthetic psychology, especially in the study of literature, of signs, symbols, and meanings in all arts, and of art criticism and evaluation expressed in words.[14]

General psychology has much to learn from a study of aesthetic data. Its account of human nature is sadly incomplete while it neglects those forms of thought and construction in which human nature expresses itself on civilized levels. It has learned much, but can learn a great deal more, from the insights of artists about human nature: for example, from the poetry of Coleridge.[15] Many current psychological notions about "basic human nature," put forward as true of all mankind, have been derived from too limited a sampling of human beings; mostly from modern Western urban culture. Its dilemma has been that, in examining thought on a high level of complex, rational, and imaginative development, it necessarily moves away from those levels on which generalizations can be made about all human beings, or even all humans of a certain age, sex, and personality type. It enters a realm where the patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior differ tremendously in different cultures and periods of history. To find psychological principles with any approach to universal validity on this level, we must first compare a great many cultures, and trait-complexes within them.

This leads directly to the comparative analysis of styles in art: to their interpretation, not only as kinds of art product, but as evidences of how people think, feel, imagine, and act in a certain

[14] B. C. Heyl, *New Bearings in Esthetics and Art Criticism* (New Haven, Conn., 1943). C. Morris, *Signs, Language, and Behavior* (New York, 1946) and "Aesthetics and the Theory of Signs," *Journal of Unified Science,* VIII (1939), 131–150. M. W. Hess, "Symbolic Logic and Aesthetics," *Journal of Philosophy,* XXXVII (1940), 579-581. I. P. Creed, "Iconic Signs and Expressiveness," *J.A.A.C.,* III:11–12, 5–14. C. Amyx, "The Iconic Sign in Aesthetics," *J.A.A.C.,* VI:1 (September, 1947), 54–60.

[15] S. J. Kahn, "Psychology in Coleridge's Poetry," *J.A.A.C.,* IX:3 (March, 1951).

place, time, and cultural setting. One of the new psychological approaches which is most promising for aesthetics is that of *cultural psychology,* or the psychology of different cultural groups, often involving a combination of psychoanalysis with anthropology and ethnology.[16] Building upon the hypotheses of Freud's *Totem and Taboo,* but often differing with Freud on special points (e.g., the universality of the Oedipus complex), and building also on fresh data gathered in the field, it provides illuminating theories of the different types of basic personality involved in different culture patterns. Little has been done so far to interpret the art products of these different peoples in the light of a deeper understanding of their psychic structure; but that is the obvious next step, from the standpoint of aesthetics.

Important contributions to aesthetics are being made, in America as elsewhere, by logic, mathematics, the physical and biological sciences; but space is lacking here to discuss them.

3. Current trends in American aesthetics

The following tendencies appear to be increasing in American aesthetics, though they are by no means completely dominant:

(a) An *international* and *intercultural* outlook rather than a narrowly nationalistic one; a broadly human, world outlook rather than a purely occidental one; a selective synthesis of attitudes toward art from many different cultures.[1] This parallels and supplements the current eclectic wave in the arts themselves, with much selective borrowing, revival, and adaptation from exotic and primitive styles, and different degrees of success in thoroughly integrating them. Since the end of World War II, aesthetics has again become an in-

[16] A. Kardiner and others, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society* (New York, 1945). R. Linton, *The Cultural Background of Personality* (New York, 1945). G. Bateson and M. Mead, *Balinese Character* (New York, 1942). C. Kluckhohn and H. A. Murray (eds.), *Personality in Nature, Society, and Culture* (New York, 1949). D. G. Haring (ed.), *Personal Character and Cultural Milieu* (Syracuse, N. Y., 1948).

[1] F. S. C. Northrop, *The Meeting of East and West* (New York, 1946). J. Remenyi, "Nationalism, Internationalism, and Universality in Literature," *J.A.A.C.,* V:1 (September, 1946), 44–49. T. Munro, "The Arts in General Education: a Program for Cultural Interchange," *Eastern Arts Association Yearbook, Art in General Education* (Kutztown, Pa., 1949), p. 25.

ternational subject. Important publications in each country are noted elsewhere, and international meetings are again being held. A new generation of American scholars is taking an active part in the revival of aesthetics on a world scale. Co-operation is especially active between the American and French groups.

(b) An *enlargement* of the scope of aesthetics to include, besides the traditional problems of aesthetic value, all theoretical studies of the arts and related types of experience and behavior. Thus it includes the more general, philosophical areas in a number of different scientific approaches to these phenomena: especially those of psychology, the history of the arts and of culture, sociology, and anthropology.

(c) As a phase of this enlargement, there is less narrow concentration on the problem of defining "beauty." Aesthetics was formerly regarded as "the philosophy of beauty," a subject devoted largely to explaining the nature of beauty and ugliness, with a few related ideas such as "good taste" and "the sublime." These words occur much less often in contemporary discussion. There is no other small set of concepts to take their place, but a much wider range, to cope with the diverse phenomena of art and behavior toward art. As to art, there is much discussion of the varieties of form and style and of factors in them, such as design, representation, and symbolism. The psychology of art (aesthetic psychology) is no longer limited to "the sense of beauty," "good taste," and the "aesthetic attitude" in a narrow sense (e.g., implying extreme detachment). It studies a great variety of responses to art, of ways of experiencing and using it, all of which are in a broad sense aesthetic phenomena; also many ways of producing and performing it—there is no one, uniform "creative process." To understand the processes involved in art, aesthetic psychology has to study them in other manifestations also: e.g., to study fantasy in dreams and neurotic symptoms as well as in art. But it emphasizes the ways in which human nature manifests itself in art.

(d) Greater interest in the *cultural* and *social* aspects of art, along with sustained interest in the artist as an individual personality. Art is regarded more as a social manifestation than as a product of isolated individual genius or supernatural inspiration. Both artist and work of art are linked up with recurrent psychological and cultural trends, instead of being placed on a high pedestal as unique

and inexplicable. Art is also a social problem and responsibility, for best use and development in the interest of general welfare.[2]

(e) Greater interest in the *utilitarian, instrumental, functional* aspects of art, along with sustained interest in the more distinctively aesthetic ones, which are experienced in direct perception. Abandonment of the sharp antithesis between aesthetic and practical, fine and useful, art; recognition that both types are constantly mingled. Abandonment of the aristocratic assumption that purely fine and aesthetic art and experience are essentially superior. At the same time, there is a growing belief that American culture has overemphasized the *narrowly* practical, and needs to develop the aesthetic and intellectual phases of its culture. Thomas Jefferson, who combined artistic gifts with democratic statesmanship, set us a good example in this respect: due attention to both practical utility and decorative form; a place for the arts in liberal education.

(f) A broadly *practical approach to aesthetics itself.* From Emerson to Dewey, it has been emphasized in America that philosophy itself, as well as art, should retain close touch with everyday life. Philosophical ideas should grow out of practical as well as scientific experience, and return again to help reorganize our thought and action in every phase of life. Aesthetic theory, likewise, should grow out of experience with the arts and other aesthetic phases of life; then return to clarify and redirect our beliefs and attitudes in that realm. It should be practical and utilitarian in this broad sense, though *not* (this point is often misunderstood abroad) in the sense of seeking quick material returns in the shape of power, wealth, efficiency, physical comfort, and the like. A broad conception of "practice" includes all phases of aesthetic and artistic activity: the writing of symphonies and sonnets and the appreciation of their aesthetic, intellectual, and other spiritual values. In these activities, aesthetic methods and concepts can be dynamic, useful tools, and American writers are trying to make them so. Things which are "useless" in the narrowly practical sense may have another kind of utility in the cultural realm. In Europe, the tradition lingers on that aesthetics should confine itself to pure, abstract reasoning about

[2] As in John Dewey's *Art as Experience* (New York, 1934). Also, for example, C. W. Condit, "Modern Architecture: a New Technical-Aesthetic Synthesis," *J.A.A.C.*, VI:2 (December, 1947), 45–54. P. Zucker, "The Role of Architecture in Future Civilization," *J.A.A.C.*, III:9–10, 30–38.

beauty, and that any practical aim whatever in such reasoning is a fault, not a virtue. The danger of this attitude, from the American point of view, is that aesthetic theory becomes inert, false, and artificial, of little value even on the intellectual level.

(g) A *democratic* attitude, regarding art as for the benefit of all who are capable of making, using, or enjoying it; a disposition to extend its benefits and opportunities as widely as possible, and to allow considerable *freedom* of experimentation in it.[3] Such freedom is limited by precarious economic support for many kinds of art; also by moral codes which are still strict in sexual matters, though relaxing; also by pressures from various racial and religious groups to prevent artistic expressions offensive to them. This applies especially to mass media such as film and radio. Otherwise, there is no strong tendency to limit the production of art to that which all can understand and enjoy, or to make it directly subservient to the state, as in totalitarian regimes. The activity and influence of government in art remain slight (much less than in Europe), having declined again since the wave of government sponsorship for art projects during the depression. One of the distinctive features of American art is its almost wholly private sponsorship, by individuals or corporations; the comparative lack of direct initiative in art production by political or ecclesiastical agencies. This is reflected in aesthetic theories of the autonomy of art, its right to complete freedom of individual expression, as opposed to the belief in its subordination to church or state; and to an emphasis on its religious, moral, or civic responsibility. The doctrine of "art for art's sake" remains strong in practice though often attacked by American theorists, art being still popularly regarded as a pastime for leisure entertainment.

(h) *Empiricism,* in a broad sense rather than *a priori* rationalism or mysticism. The basing of inferences on observation through the senses and by introspection; on experience, individual and collective, rather than on deduction from first principles regarded as self-evident or as revealed by supernatural authority. This does not imply any of the special psychological and epistemological theories which have been associated with empiricism in the past, especially in British eighteenth-century philosophy. It does not imply extreme

[3] H. M. Kallen, *Art and Freedom* (New York, 1942).

associationism or behaviorism, or the limiting of data to what can be directly observed from the outside.

(i) In *value theory,* a trend toward *relativism* and *descriptive, factual investigation.*

(j) In *metaphysics* and in general philosophical *world view,* a trend toward *naturalism.* Let us consider these last two trends in some detail.

4. Trends in aesthetic value theory

Moderate *relativism* in standards of value lies between the two opposite extremes of absolutism and individualistic anarchy.[1] It implies a belief that there is no single rule or standard for determining the worth of a work of art under any and all conditions; there is no metaphysical or religious basis for believing that any specific standards of good art are inherent in the nature of the universe, or that any one style of art is divinely ordained. There is no particular kind of art which is best from every point of view; there is no one right way to produce, perform, or experience art; there are many good ways, each with different values. On the other hand, aesthetic value is not to be dismissed as purely subjective and individual. Evaluation is both an individual and a social process, based in part on our common physical nature, in part on the diverse and changing conditions, needs, and functions which art is called upon to exercise, and in relation to which works of art are given different values at different times.[2]

There is increasing emphasis today on a descriptive, *fact-finding* approach to aesthetics, as distinguished from the old, purely *evaluative* approach. Aesthetics and ethics were formerly regarded as "normative" subjects, aimed at establishing rules of good art and standards for evaluation. This was in contrast with the "natural" or descriptive sciences, which aimed at reporting the facts of nature. Evaluation is still a major concern of aesthetics, but it is no longer the whole concern. There is a tendency to feel that aesthetics has also an important descriptive task to do, which is analogous to that of other natural sciences: in observing, describing, and seeking to understand the nature of the arts and of related types of experience

[1] B. C. Heyl, "Relativism Again," *J.A.A.C.,* V:1 (September, 1946), 54–61.
[2] G. Boas, *Wingless Pegasus* (Baltimore, 1950).

and behavior; not superficially, but as to their underlying tendencies, recurrent patterns, and causal relationships.

Furthermore, it is felt that at certain times, in the interest of descriptive accuracy, aesthetics should try to avoid value judgments, expressed or implied, and devote itself to setting down the facts as it finds them. During the pre-scientific stage, as in all other sciences, its accounts of fact have been indiscriminately mixed with personal evaluations, expressions of approval and disapproval. Thus early biology praised the lion and the pelican as noble beasts, teaching a good moral lesson. Now the biologist observes the disagreeable mosquito and typhoid germ with equal and dispassionate care; his feelings toward them have no place in his account of their structure and behavior. Aesthetics has been so impatient to arrive at rules and judgments of value that it has neglected the factual investigation of aesthetic phenomena. The latter is important, first as a part of the general scientific pursuit of truth—the task of understanding human nature and its environment. Second, it is important as a step toward using and controlling art more effectively in the interest of human welfare. Third, it is a necessary basis for the intelligent, informed evaluation of art, artists, and experiences of art. To evaluate wisely in any field, we must at times stop arguing about values, and examine the facts and tendencies on which values are based.

True, values are a kind of fact and of natural phenomenon; they are not mysterious, transcendental qualities outside the order of nature. But they are a peculiar kind of fact, whose study presents unusual difficulties. The value of a picture cannot be directly observed in the same way that one observes its size, shape, and color. To study it, we must observe its relation to human beings: its uses and effects in their experience.

It would, of course, be quite impossible to exclude evaluation entirely, even from those phases of aesthetics which are predominantly descriptive in aim. One evaluates in the very act of deciding what problems, artists, and works of art are most worth studying. Complete objectivity is impossible in any realm of human thought. But there is a real difference in emphasis. In certain phases of aesthetics, such as axiology and theories of criticism, one deals directly and explicitly with evaluative problems as such. In others, such as stylistic analysis and aesthetic psychology, one tries to keep one's personal tastes and cultural prejudices in the background, and to

describe outstanding types and trends in the phenomena without regard to whether they are good or bad, beautiful or ugly.

To be scientific, aesthetics does not need to evade the task of evaluation altogether, or postpone it until all the facts have been discovered. This would leave it entirely to the supernaturalists and transcendentalists, who are quite ready to take it over with their vague and ancient dogmas, insisting that science is incapable of dealing with it. Science can deal with it and is doing so, but in a roundabout way. It is steadily making evaluation more informed and rational by providing relevant information in each field, analyzing assumptions, and developing appropriate, reliable methods of inference. But one must not expect from scientific aesthetics that which, from the standpoint of naturalism and relativism, is impossible. One must not expect any simple, specific formula for distinguishing good from bad art under any and all conditions.

In aesthetics, the descriptive phase is not yet fully conscious and consistent. In current studies of art, especially of recent, controversial styles, description of fact is constantly mixed with judgments of value. An artist's work, or a style such as cubism, is described partly in terms of observable characteristics such as angular lines, design of flat color areas, etc.; partly in terms expressing praise or disparagement, such as beautiful or ugly, crude or well drawn, successful or unsuccessful, pleasant or disagreeable, better or worse than some other. There is nothing wrong in such evaluation per se; it is the business of art criticism, and every human in a free society has the right to express his likes and dislikes. But evaluation obstructs scientific progress when it is advanced, not frankly as an expression of personal attitudes or debatable standards, but as an objective account of the facts. It is a naïve survival of primitive thinking when the critic projects his own emotional responses into the outside world and assumes that things are really good or bad in themselves, in accordance with his likes and dislikes. The amazing thing is that so many philosophers and scholars of reputation, men who practice scientific objectivity in other fields, will lose it completely in discussing art. From the objective analysis of form and style, they will slip unconsciously into glorifying this artist, damning that, and rationalizing their judgments with erudite but specious technical arguments. In a psychological account of the creative or appreciative process, they will argue that a certain way of painting or looking at

pictures, or of listening to music, is the right one; others incorrect or inferior. As a result, the whole discussion becomes controversial and degenerates into fruitless wrangling over tastes, with little advance in knowledge. In past aesthetics, evaluative disputes have so monopolized the floor that descriptive inquiry seldom had a chance to begin. Aesthetics develops along scientific lines as more and more workers in it try to suspend and restrain their impulses to praise and disparage along with description of the facts.

The subject of evaluation itself is now approached in a more descriptive spirit,[3] with the aim of discovering the nature of the evaluative process and of determining factors in it, both in human nature and in its cultural environment; [4] the ways in which evaluation is performed and expressed; their semantic, logical, epistemological, and metaphysical implications; [5] the history of taste; [6] the various kinds of art which people of different types and cultural groups have preferred, and why; what standards of value are actually used in different cultural groups and periods; how they have arisen, why they are accepted, and with what results; [7] their relation to other cultural factors; how they express different attitudes, culture patterns, motivations, and stages in social development; what ends

[3] George Santayana, in a letter to the author from Rome, recalling the latter's enthusiasm for primitive Negro sculpture, added, "There is a theme for your Society to investigate philosophically and scientifically. I am glad that you are approaching the vast subject of the arts from that side, rather than from that of precepts and taste. The philosophers have written a good deal of vague stuff about the beautiful and the critics a good deal of accidental partisan stuff about right and wrong in art. If you will only discover why and when people develop such arts and such tastes, you will be putting things on a sounder basis." *J.A.A.C.*, IV:2 (December, 1945), 131.

[4] John Dewey, *Theory of Valuation* (Chicago, Ill.) This is a reprint from *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, II:4 (1939, 1943).

[5] R. Lepley (ed.), *Value, A Cooperative Inquiry* (New York, 1949). A. L. Hilliard, *The Forms of Value* (New York, 1950).

[6] F. P. Chambers, *Cycles of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass., 1928) and *The History of Taste* (New York, 1932). B. S. Allen, *Tides in English Taste* (Cambridge, Mass., 1937). L. L. Schücking, *The Sociology of Literary Taste* (London, 1944).

[7] G. Boas, *A Primer for Critics* (Baltimore, 1937). T. Munro, "The Verification of Standards of Value," *Journal of Philosophy* (May 25, 1922). H. Hungerland, "Suggestions for Procedure in Art Criticism," *J.A.A.C.*, V:3 (March, 1947), 189–195. H. Leichtentritt, "Aesthetic Ideas as the Basis of Musical Styles," *J.A.A.C.*, IV:2 (December, 1945), 65–73. N. Cazden, "Musical Consonance and Dissonance: a Cultural Criterion," *J.A.A.C.*, IV:5 (September, 1945), 3–11.

and functions art has served, both consciously and unconsciously; what effects each type of art tends to have on and for different types of person under different conditions.[8] The functions and experiences thus examined include both instrumental and immediate or consummatory, utilitarian, and aesthetic; perceptual, emotional, cognitive, and other.

Much that was formerly expressed in terms of value is now expressed in more descriptive terms. For example, one can state that a certain kind of art is conducive to certain specific ends which are approved by certain groups or types of person in a certain culture and period, one's own or another. Such generalizations tend to be explicitly limited and relative in scope, as a correlation between specific variables; they do not assert that something is good or bad in general. Particular styles of art, or characteristics of art, are recognized as conducive to particular kinds of aesthetic effect, so that the artist can use them as means to that end if he so desires; but this is not to say that they are always right. Past rules and precepts for good art, formerly regarded as universally true, are now regarded as expressions of a certain temporary cultural attitude, associated with the production of a certain style of art. They suggest possible means and ends to the modern artist, showing him how to produce many different effects, and they help us understand the motivation of past styles. Standards and judgments of value are recognized as open to criticism and correction in some respects,[9] e.g., as involving verbal ambiguities or logical fallacies in reasoning, or as based on misconception of the facts. They may assume a false belief as to the effect of certain kinds of art on health or moral conduct; e.g., the effect on children of films dealing with crime. Also, one may recognize that a certain kind of taste is motivated by juvenile attitudes, limited experience, neurotic conflict, or temporary passion inconsistent with the individual's more stable character configuration. This does not mean that it is bad taste, but it helps one to understand it, and to work out one's own tastes and standards in the light of this knowledge.

Much aesthetic evaluation can be descriptively expressed as (a) a

[8] M. Schoen (ed.), *The Effects of Music* (New York, 1927). K. M. Wells, "The Fugue as an Expressive Vehicle," *J.A.A.C.*, VI:4 (June, 1948).

[9] G. Santayana, *Reason in Art* (New York, 1905), Ch. X, "The Criterion of Taste."

prediction as to the probable future effects of a work of art, immediately, instrumentally, or both; (b) an estimate as to the relation between such probable effects and the set of aesthetic and moral standards accepted by the individual or group, as conforming or conflicting with them. The work of art can be described, after investigation, as conducive or nonconducive to certain effects; hence, perhaps, as successful or unsuccessful in achieving a certain end which the artist aimed at, or which the observer expects and desires in works of this type.

Even the evaluation by an individual of a work of art in front of him is often based on assumptions (more or less unconscious) about the object's probable future consequences or potentialities, as a stimulus to favorable aesthetic experience by himself and others. This usually happens in buying a picture to be placed on view in one's home. Judgments on the object's probable conduciveness to certain effects can be made more reliably in regard to large groups, over a long period of time, than in regard to an immediate, individual response. For example, we can predict with some accuracy what kind of story, toy, or garment will please most ten-year-old boys in a certain environment.

Predictions can be more accurate when made about fairly specific types of art, in relation to specific types of individual and situation, than when vague and sweeping. Hence, the descriptive investigation of evaluative phenomena cannot be carried far without a reliable, scientific classification of types of (a) art product—e.g., into styles or types of aesthetic form in terms of apperceptible characteristics; (b) culture pattern, including social standards of aesthetic value; (c) individual personality; stable configurations of motivation and habit, as affecting taste and preference; (d) transitory configurations in the individual, passing moods, desires, aversions, attitudes, which strongly affect aesthetic response; (e) circumstances, conditions, external situations in which aesthetic responses and evaluations occur—e.g., those of work, play, worship, war; the setting or context in which the work is experienced—e.g., a museum, church, concert hall, dance hall, park, theater, or library. Correlations and joint products of these variable factors can then be observed and described more accurately.

Sweeping, dogmatic evaluations in criticism are now giving place to analyses of what specific, diverse effects a work of art does or does

not achieve. One asks, for example, how successful and consistent it has been in achieving the peculiar aesthetic qualities expected of a certain style, such as rococo or romantic. Judgments of the superiority of one historic style over another are made only relatively, with the recognition that each has its own distinctive values, and that different ones may be preferable at different times. Such traditional standards as unity, variety, symmetry, realism, and the like are recognized as extremely vague and ambiguous, taking on specific meaning only when concretely applied. They stand for different groups of qualities often desired in art, sometimes reconcilable and sometimes not. The relative weight or importance assigned to each group varies greatly according to the period, social setting, and specific occasion. The "greatness" of an artist or work of art is felt to involve many debatable issues, such as "originality" or historical priority, and also the power to maintain the interest and respect of élite groups in successive generations.

Evaluation, in art and ethics, cannot be made entirely scientific, logical, or rational. One's acceptance of certain aims and standards in art is basically a conative, emotional process, determined by heredity and environment. An individual may think he is arriving at his standards by pure reason and proving them logically, but this is an illusion. The very willingness to accept certain arguments, evidences, and modes of thinking rather than others—to be dogmatic, mystical, or empirical, ascetic or sensuous—has been previously developed in him.

Science can never prove that an individual ought to like or desire something which his entire personality structure, his innate endowment, and cultural conditioning impel him to detest. Modern occidental culture cannot prove to a primitive, mystical, thaumaturgic culture that its own rational, practical, extroverted aims are best. But for those who already accept its general aims and premises with regard to the values of life and the trustworthiness of logical, empirical reasoning, science offers help in achieving those values more fully and effectively through art. It may hope to show, for example, how mental and physical health, social co-operation, earthly happiness and pleasure, the growth of perceptual, imaginative, and intellectual powers, variety and richness of experience can be most effectively achieved through the arts if one wants to achieve them. Such techniques can never be reduced to a simple, static formula.

The most effective means will vary too much in relation to individual differences and changing conditions. But they will not vary completely. Human nature and its environing conditions also display much that is similar, enduring, or recurrent. Therein lies the hope for generalized, flexible, relativistic value standards which will express more than an individual's passing fancy. Though not eternal or universal, they will express fairly widespread, enduring tendencies in specific age, sex, and personality types and in large cultural groups, Thus they will offer help in making both social and individual evaluation more informed and rational for those who wish it to become so.

Investigation is producing a multitude of tentative generalizations, subject to change with increasing knowledge, as to the tendency of certain types of art to fulfill certain functions or lead to certain consequences, depending on the personalities and circumstances involved. They vary greatly in degree of generality: some attempting to show that certain tendencies hold true for human nature on the whole, or at least for all adult, civilized humanity, as constant behavior traits underlying all cultural variation. However, philosophy is not limited to generalizations of maximum breadth, which are often so abstract as to have little importance in theory or practice. There is need for more studies of intermediate breadth in aesthetics.

There is also need for scientific help in the practical work of evaluating art. While philosophers debate interminably over the theoretical possibility of value judgments, these are being made on every hand without much help from science or philosophy. Teachers of the arts have to grade their students' work and award prizes and scholarships.[10] Historians praise some artists and ignore others. Critics are paid to advise us what plays to see, what music to hear, and what books to read. Official commissions pass on plans for public parks and buildings. Museum officials purchase works of art. There is too great a gap between this practical, everyday work of aesthetic evaluation and the abstractions of philosophic value theory. The latter could help to make evaluation more informed and intelligent, more conscious of its standards and the reasons for them, more specific as to means and ends. At the same time, it could learn some-

[10] *Art in American Life and Education* (Bloomington, Ill., 1941), Chs. XXIII (Munro), XXVII (Faulkner), and XXX (Patzig). F. Beverley, "The Art Teacher and Evaluation," *Art Education Today* (New York, 1949–50), p. 85.

thing about evaluation from observing and co-operating in this work.

Most value theory in recent American philosophy has been so highly specialized on formal, dialectical problems that it has paid little attention to the wealth of new empirical material from various sciences which reveals how aesthetic evaluation actually occurs in life, and its relation to other psychological and social factors.[11] Thinkers such as Dewey, with genuinely philosophical scope, see the need of considering the light which anthropology throws on valuation in different cultures. There are many useful approaches to aesthetic value today. Semantics, logic, and metaphysics are among them. They are analyzing and clarifying the concepts and propositional forms in which value judgments are expressed, and pointing out the philosophical assumptions involved. But complex emotional attitudes and practical considerations cannot all be reduced to a few simple, logical formulas. Thinking about aesthetics too much in terms of formal logic tends to become artificial and remote from the life situations out of which actual evaluative problems arise. The gulf between them must be bridged by more extensive empirical reference in value theory.

5. Naturalism and supernaturalism

American aesthetics is today strongly naturalistic, in a broad sense opposed to supernaturalism, transcendentalism, mysticism, pantheism, metaphysical idealism or dualism. It implies the belief that works of art and experiences connected with them, like thought and other human activities, are phenomena of nature, continuous with those examined in the physical and biological sciences, and arising out of them through evolution; different in degree of complexity, variability, and other respects, but involving no fundamental difference in kind which would make aesthetic phenomena permanently inaccessible to scientific, empirical investigation. This does not mean that the concepts and methods of the older natural sciences, or those of biology, psychology, or the social sciences, are wholly adequate for dealing with aesthetic phenomena. In exploring each new field of phenomena, science must develop new concepts and new procedures.

[11] W. E. Henry, "Art and Cultural Symbolism, a Psychological Study of Greeting Cards," *J.A.A.C.*, VI:1 (September, 1947), 36–44.

Naturalism in aesthetics does not necessarily imply a complete metaphysical naturalism, materialism, mechanism, atheism, agnosticism, or any specific theory in that realm.[1] It is quite compatible with many forms of religious belief. It does not imply that art should be a mere imitation of sensuous appearance, or devoted to sensuous pleasure, or dwell upon evil and ugliness; it does not imply that expression of religious and moral ideals in art is unimportant. It does go along with the general tendency of Western civilization since the Renaissance to shift attention and interest from things of a supposed other world to things of this world, with a basis in physical nature. It is not the same as "naturalism" in the special sense applied to Zola and other French artists of the nineteenth century. It implies no praise or preference for any particular style of art.

The relation of aesthetics to the other traditional branches of philosophy—logic, epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics—still engages the attention of American philosophers, and rightly so. Much as naturalistic aestheticians may try to avoid philosophical assumptions, they cannot wholly do so. Their efforts to produce an aesthetics without metaphysical commitments often seem to their adversaries as mere evasion or failure to think consistently and systematically.[2] It would be better in the long run for them to risk head-on attack by frankly avowing a thoroughgoing naturalistic philosophy, if that is what they believe. The practice of building up aesthetic theories empirically, and not by direct deduction from *a priori* principles, is only partly an escape from metaphysics and epistemology. Tacitly, if not explicitly, it indicates a disbelief in the authority of such alleged principles (e.g., of metaphysical idealism or divine mandate) and a sympathy with some form of the naturalistic world view. It implies respect for sense-data as a source of knowledge, and respect for the life of the senses, physical desires and emotions, as potentially good. Naturalistic aesthetics is in great need of clarifying its position in a coherent philosophic system. It

[1] Two recent symposia on naturalism, including discussion of aesthetic value: Y. H. Krikorian (ed.), *Naturalism and the Human Spirit* (New York, 1944); V. J. McGill, R. W. Sellars, and M. Farber (eds.), *Philosophy for the Future* (New York, 1949).

[2] J. R. Reid, *A Theory of Value* (New York, 1938), Ch. VIII, "Naturalistic Standards." Cf. H. D. Aiken, "Criteria for an Adequate Aesthetics," *J.A.A.C.*, VII:2 (December, 1948), 141–148, with discussions by Boas, Ducasse, and Pepper.

is flexible, and can be squared to some extent with many rival doctrines in metaphysics, ethics, and epistemology. Such issues should not be concealed or evaded, but explored to the full, even though they are not of great interest to all students of the arts. Thus future thinking on aesthetics will have the benefit of searching philosophic criticism, and will pay for it by providing new grist for the philosopher's mill.

Contemporary French philosophy is in especial need of a vigorously naturalistic, empiricist, or positivist approach, as a middle course between the extremes of traditional dualism or panpsychism on the one hand, and Marxism on the other. There as elsewhere the communist distortions of scientific materialism, for polemic reasons and with cynical disdain for truth, have driven many intellectuals back to religious traditionalism. French students of philosophy and aesthetics often fail to realize the possibility of any third alternative. For a while, it was hoped that existentialism would provide a middle course, continuing the great tradition of Comte and Taine. But that movement, in spite of its air of sophistication, seems hopelessly bogged down in obsolete metaphysical, ethical, and verbal pseudo-problems.[3]

The present international trend in aesthetics has, in the field of art history and connoisseurship, favored a slight revival of oriental transcendentalism and mysticism. This trend is felt more in aesthetics than in other branches of philosophy. The visual arts of oriental and medieval supernaturalism are still very much alive and respected, whereas some other phases of these cultures have less to offer the modern occidental philosopher. The scholar who spends years in the admiring study of past religious art often comes to believe, to some degree, in the truth of the creeds which inspired it, and to condemn modern naturalism for its many faults and crudities.[4]

This is not the place to debate religious or metaphysical issues. But one or two points should be clarified in passing. It goes without saying that aesthetics in a democracy, such as France or the United

[3] C. Rau, "The Aesthetic Views of Jean-Paul Sartre," *J.A.A.C.*, IX:2 (December, 1950), 139. V. M. Ames, "Existentialism and the Arts," *J.A.A.C.*, IX:2, (March, 1951).

[4] A. Coomaraswamy, *The Transformation of Nature in Art* (Cambridge, Mass., 1934). C. R. Morey, *Christian Art* (New York, 1935).

States, is a field in which radically different beliefs and approaches can flourish. Its professional societies and journals in both countries have explicitly welcomed such difference of opinion. The pragmatist will look to see what fruits are produced by each school of thought; if ancient schools, now out of fashion, can be fruitfully revived, so much the better for everyone. But it is sometimes hard to tell what creed should get the credit for a particular achievement. People are never quite consistent, and a philosopher may be a supernaturalist in some respects, a naturalist in others. There are many possible areas of agreement and co-operation between persons whose beliefs on metaphysical ultimates are at opposite poles. Disagreements often turn out to be partly verbal.

Vigorous proponents of supernaturalism and transcendentalism, in one form or another, have not been lacking in our time. Croce was a doughty fighter in his attack on Dewey's aesthetics.[5] Maritain and other Neo-Thomists have recalled to many Americans that medieval Catholicism had a definite philosophy of art, surprisingly flexible in relation to post-impressionist experimentation.[6] The late Ananda Coomaraswamy stoutly belabored modern naturalism in art and art theory, while defending the so-called *philosophia perennis,* which, he believed, had been shared by all true philosophers of East and West. "Mr. Coomaraswamy's *bête noire,*" writes Katharine Gilbert, "is aesthetics. Since he fixes the meaning of the term by its etymology, and does not believe in progress, it would seem futile, for one who believes in the history of aesthetics as precisely the progressive enrichment of understanding in matters relating to art, to argue with him." [7] Many of the faults for which he berates aesthetics have long been attacked and discarded by modern aestheticians; many of the things he urges have long been done. Holding a narrow definition of aesthetics, and a false conception of modern art as concerned only with sensuous appearances and pleasures, he ignores the

[5] B. Croce, "On the Aesthetics of Dewey," *J.A.A.C.,* VI:3 (March, 1948), 203–207. J. Dewey, "A Comment on the Foregoing Criticisms," *Ibid.,* pp. 207–209.

[6] J. Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism* (New York, 1930). E. Chapman "Some Aspects of St. Augustine's Philosophy of Beauty," *J.A.A.C.,* I:1 (Spring, 1941), 46–51. C. A. Hart, "The Place of Aesthetics in Philosophy," *J.A.A.C.,* II:6 (1943), 3–11. L. Callahan, *A Theory of Esthetic According to the Principles of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, 1947).

[7] K. Gilbert, Review of Coomaraswamy's "Why Exhibit Works of Art?" *Art Bulletin,* XXX:2 (June, 1948), 157.

tremendous amount of work which has been done in recent aesthetics on the moral, intellectual, and cultural significance of art. Nevertheless, his own interpretations of oriental art and the oriental philosophy of art have been eagerly accepted by aestheticians, critics, and historians of all schools. They are invaluable aids in freeing modern aesthetics from occidental provincialism, and giving it the international, cosmopolitan scope described in the third section of this article. Coomaraswamy's anti-empiricist doctrine seldom interfered with his keen, visual observation of works of art. His historical attributions, his generalizations on styles in Indian art, are objective *Kunstwissenschaft* of a rigorous type. On the whole, his work is among the most valuable of American contributions to the subject he denounced. Aside from his rather naïve and misinformed attacks on modern Western art, science, and culture, it is acceptable to scholars of all philosophical creeds. Likewise, one can disagree with the basic principles of a St. Thomas, a Hegel, a Marx, an Emerson, or a Spengler, and yet find much to admire and accept in their incidental observations and comments by the way.[8] Some supernaturalists remain forever rapt in contemplation of the Absolute, or of a personal deity; others descend from time to time into the world and have mundane experiences in common with other mortals. They can talk of art in its phenomenal aspects and find a common ground of discourse with men of other creeds. It is only when they denounce and try to obstruct what men of other creeds are doing and believe important, that serious clashes arise. Naturalism in aesthetics has no quarrel with the various current brands of mysticism, supernaturalism, and immanent pantheism, except when they seek to obstruct and discourage all approaches but their own. It welcomes their positive contributions, which are many and rich, to the understanding of religious art and of aesthetic and mystical experience as actual phenomena of human life. They explain phenomena and point out values which are often ignored by occidental science and lost in modern life. To what extent these can be achieved along with naturalistic beliefs and attitudes is a question for the future.

The attacks of such men as Croce[9] and Coomaraswamy on

[8] See H. D. Aiken's review of H. E. Cory, *The Significance of Beauty in Nature and Art* (Milwaukee, 1947) in *Journal of Philosophy* (August 25, 1948).

[9] B. Croce, "Aesthetics," *Encyclopedia Britannica,* 14th ed. He speaks of "a hopeless attempt to solve the problems of aesthetics, which are philosophical

naturalism are based on constant misrepresentation of it, in distorted summaries and quotations out of context. Naturalism is persistently identified with crass materialism, with devotion to the crudely sensual and sordid, with antagonism to "the spirit" and to all the finer things of life, with the idea that art is "entirely physical," and with every mistaken theory of history and psychology advanced by Victorian evolutionists. Moderate attitudes are distorted into extreme ones. Any defense of scientific method in aesthetics is construed as a rejection of all philosophical aesthetics, or as a belief that beauty can be measured, or that aesthetic values can be decided by majority votes. Such misinterpretation has been heard less frequently in recent years.

If and when aesthetics becomes a full-fledged science, it will not cease to be philosophical.[10] It may not be formally classed as a branch of philosophy. Those working in it may prefer, like present-day psychologists, to have their field classed as a separate field of investigation, and not as "philosophy of art." But such divisions are merely for convenience. Every science today still retains connections with philosophy, its ancient ancestor; it contains areas of comparatively philosophical thinking. Those physicists who analyze basic physical concepts and assumptions such as matter, space, and energy; those who systematize current physical theory in a comprehensive way, are philosophical physicists. Their work is on the borderline between the two realms and can be classed in either. So it will be with aesthetics. The diversity of sources from which aesthetics now derives its information, including all or most of the other sciences in addition to direct examination of its own data, makes the work of philosophical synthesis doubly needed. Ideally, the philosopher's role in scientific aesthetics should not be merely one of receiving and assembling data, but also one of actively initiating and guiding projects of investigation, and of formulating, criticizing, and revising goals, assumptions, methods, and general conclusions.

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problems, by the methods of empirical science." For Croce's other work, see E. Roditi, "The Growth and Structure of Croce's Philosophy," *J.A.A.C.* (Spring, 1942), 14–29.

[10] I. Edman, "The Challenge of the Arts to Philosophy," *Journal of Philosophy,* XLIV (1947), 407–413.

6. Divisions of aesthetics, present and future

While the enlargement of aesthetics is still going on, through the merging of many approaches, there is no need to build up definite divisions within it. Attempts to do so would obstruct what is most needed—great freedom for new syntheses from different points of view. However, flexible and temporary divisions are being made on many lines as necessary steps in marking off limited fields for researches, articles, books, and college courses. Such divisions are partly professional and administrative in basis.

The main present division in American aesthetics is between philosophical aesthetics or philosophy of art on the one hand—i.e., that which is taught by philosophy professors—and, on the other, the more empirical approaches, often classed under art history, the psychology of art, the principles of art criticism, the principles of literary criticism, the aesthetics of music, etc. This may last a long time, even after aesthetics as a whole is better integrated, but more thorough integration will tend to merge them to some extent.

There is a trend toward *comparative* aesthetics, embracing all the arts. Within this field, there is a trend toward separating evaluative studies (as in art criticism) from non-evaluative, descriptive studies of the arts (as in comparison and classification of the arts). Aesthetic *value theory* (axiology) and *generalized art criticism,* where standards of value are formulated, interpreted, attacked, defended, and applied, is itself partly descriptive in method. The descriptive approach includes aesthetic *morphology* or the analysis of form and style in the arts. It overlaps the *history* of the arts, in which the origin and career of styles are followed chronologically, in relation to other factors in cultural history.[1] Both now discuss the symbolic meanings (conscious and unconscious) of forms in art. But aesthetic morphology tends to formulate its conclusions more in logical, theoretical order, as a classification of types, than in historical order. In morphology and art history, the main emphasis is placed on ob-

[1] H. Hungerland, "The Concept of Expressiveness in Art History," *J.A.A.C.,* III:11–12 (1944–45), 22–28; "Psychological Explanations of Style in Art," *J.A.A.C.,* IV:3 (March, 1946), 160–166. E. C. Hassold, "The Baroque as a Basic Concept of Art," *College Art Journal,* VI:1 (1946), 3–28.

jects of art, although these are necessarily studied in relation to the human beings who make and use them.

In aesthetic *psychology,* the emphasis is placed on human beings: their psychosomatic processes and patterns of behavior and experience in relation to works of art. Conclusions are formulated more in terms of general psychology than of types and historic styles of art. In the *logical* and *semantic* approaches to aesthetics, emphasis is usually placed on the verbal and other forms in which concepts, propositions, and inferences about aesthetic phenomena—e.g., value judgments—are expressed. In the *sociology, anthropology,* and *ethnology of art,* or in approaches to aesthetics from those standpoints, attention is divided between art products and the human individuals, groups, and activities related to them. The anthropologist is careful not to regard works of art as museum specimens, detached from their life contexts; whereas the morphological approach must do so to some extent, just as biologists bring plants and animals to the laboratory for comparative analysis of their structure. Aesthetic morphology, however, is not to be understood as limited to the dead, static aspects of structure; it includes dynamic aspects analogous to the life activities of the plant or animal, as described by physiology and etiology.

In aesthetic *value theory,* attention is distributed rather evenly between works of art, human beings, and verbal or other expressions of evaluation. It is concerned not only with the apperceptible characteristics of works of art, but with human feelings, desires, emotions as aroused by them and directed toward them. It is concerned with standards and judgments of value as phenomena of individual and social behavior toward works of art. It is concerned with how works of art fit into various culture patterns of organized motives, interests, goals, and moral standards, as more or less conducive or nonconducive to approved ends.

Neither the psychological nor the philosophical approach is limited to any one branch of aesthetics. In every branch, psychology is used. In all, there are comparatively philosophical areas, and comparatively specialized, or superficial ones.

There are many ways of thinking about art which can be roughly grouped as *applied aesthetics.* All are still embryonic as subjects, though often energetic and influential. They apply current knowledge and theory in the practical management and use of the arts.

These include, first, the practice of art—the use of aesthetics in the production and performance of the arts. It is a disputed question how much the artist can and should use aesthetic theory, or learn about it. Much depends on the type of artist, and also on the type of theory. In the past, it has not been of much direct help; it may obstruct the imagination, and it is often ultra-conservative, lagging behind art movements. But artists use aesthetic theories more than they realize, usually in a careless, uncritical way. Perhaps the new kind of aesthetics will be of more use to them.

Other lines of practical activity in which aesthetics is being increasingly applied are *education* in the arts, and the arts in general education; *therapeutic* uses of the arts, especially in psychopathology; the *industrial* management of the arts, as in the theatrical, concert, publishing, and building industries; *social and political* uses of the arts, for constructive ends in the achievement of social welfare. Such applications of aesthetic ideas contribute to aesthetic theory itself, by the experimental testing out of hypotheses and the gathering of data through experience.

7. *The recent development of aesthetics in America*

The early leadership of Germany in aesthetics was outstanding, from the first recognition of the subject as a branch of philosophy in the eighteenth century down almost to 1939. It was ably carried on by such contemporary figures as Max Dessoir, Emil Utitz, and Richard Müller-Freienfels, in the rich pages of the *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft,* and in an output of books and articles on the subject which overshadowed that of all other countries put together. Under these twentieth-century leaders, a series of international congresses on aesthetics was held in Germany and elsewhere. Since the war, the leadership has passed to France and the United States. There has been little activity in aesthetics in the British Isles since World War II, in spite of some excellent work in collateral fields. Aesthetics has been studied there, in recent years, mainly from the standpoint of linguistics, logical positivism, or some other highly specialized philosophic standpoint. It is not closely connected with theoretical studies of the arts.

In the United States, the subject is still at a rudimentary stage of development, by comparison with prewar Germany and with other

branches of philosophy in America.[1] We have produced some important writings on the philosophy of art from Emerson to Dewey, but with little continuity in research or discussion. No American university has taught it long and steadily, so as to build up a cumulative tradition of interest and achievement. It is usually taught, if at all, as an advanced elective course in the philosophy department; less often in the fine arts, music, English, or psychology department by some teacher who happens to be interested in theory. But it is seldom regarded as necessary, even in a liberal, humanistic curriculum.

During World War II and the years immediately after it, there was a notable growth of interest in aesthetics in the United States. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* was founded in 1941 by Dagobert Runes. After a series of preliminary conferences in that year, the American Society for Aesthetics was organized in 1942. Soon afterward, as the national, professional organization in the field, it undertook the ownership and publication of the *Journal.* The number of college courses, books, and articles on aesthetics and related subjects increased considerably in these years, in spite of unsettled conditions. High printing costs obstructed scholarly research and publication. University students were under pressure to study practical, vocational subjects as well as those of direct military value.

Isolationism is slowly giving way to extensive co-operation in aesthetics and related fields. But American writers still tend to quote chiefly from other Americans, while the English quote English sources, the French quote French ones, and the Germans those in their own language. Reading books on aesthetics from any of these countries, one is led to imagine a separate line of succession there, owing little to outside influence, its own writers always leading the way. This is due partly to national pride, partly to lack of facilities for quick translation and exchange of ideas.

Complacent isolationism exists also in each specialized branch of scholarship in the arts. The literary critics have their own little cliques for mutual admiration and quotation, each discussing the other's latest essay as if it were vastly important and original, requiring only one or two small corrections. Thus each new generation of sophisticated critics, many of them unfamiliar with philosophical aesthetics, revives in slightly altered wording the ancient perennial

[1] T. Munro, "Aesthetics and Philosophy in American Colleges," *J.A.A.C.*, IV:3 (March, 1946), 180–186.

arguments about standards of value, as if they had discovered something radically new. As in the so-called "New Criticism" of literature, proud claims to originality are made with slight justification.[2] In science, a new demonstration or discovery is quickly made common property, and used as a starting point by later scientists. In aesthetics and criticism, one cannot hope that yesterday's conclusions will be accepted as final. But there is unnecessary waste of effort and lack of cumulative progress when important work in each generation is almost ignored by the next, and its unfinished researches dropped in the scramble to appear up-to-date and to quote only the newest, most fashionable authorities.

Recent French and German writings on aesthetics and related subjects have been little read in the United States.[3] A reading knowledge of French and German has been none too common among our college graduates and artists. The influence of German aesthetics has reached us largely by way of foreign intermediaries. From Coleridge to Bosanquet and Carritt, we have received from England thinned-out versions of German transcendentalism as applied to aesthetics. Ainslie's translation in 1909 of Croce's *Aesthetic,* an Italian adaptation of Hegelianism, has influenced our intellectuals more than the vigorous Hegel himself has done. Its pompous obscurantism toward naturalistic aesthetics has done much to discourage and delay the latter's rise in this country. In the late nineteenth century, aspiring young American philosophers went to German universities if they could, but after 1900 the stream of pilgrims gradually tapered off to the vanishing point. In consequence, contemporary German philosophers were less read here, although the German classics, especially Kant and Schopenhauer, were still studied in translation. Only a few highly publicized writers, such as Freud, Jung, and Spengler, had much direct influence. Only a few young Americans went to Germany or Austria to study art history.

Hitler's rise to power in the early thirties sent to the United States, as previous waves of oppression in Europe had done, a flood of Ger-

[2] "The New Criticism is a very old criticism . . . *explication du texte,*" Malcolm Cowley in "The New Criticism," *American Scholar* (Winter, 1950–51), p. 88.

[3] For an introduction to recent French aesthetics, see the special issue of *The Journal of Aesthetics* for June, 1949, with articles by Lalo, Souriau, Bayer, Rudrauf, and others, in addition to biographical and bibliographical notes.

man-speaking scholars in exile. The result has been a new stream of influence from recent German, Austrian, and Swiss aesthetics, art history, psychology, musicology, and art education. Comparatively little of the great mass of valuable German writings in these fields, especially during the twenties, has yet been translated. (Wölfflin's *Principles of Art History* appeared in English in 1932; hardly any of the writings of Dessoir, Utitz, Müller-Freienfels, or other contemporary German aestheticians have yet been translated.) Much American work in these fields is still done in blithe ignorance of the fact that European scholars have gone over the same ground, and could save us a good deal of trouble. But a large number of German scholars are now publishing in English, and teaching in our universities. The present growth of aesthetics in America is being stimulated by this influx of learned émigrés, especially in the history of the arts. They bring us not only their own individual talents and ideas, but a delayed appreciation of the advances made in German-speaking countries since 1918 in all the fields contributing to aesthetics.

More fundamentally, however, the American development has been a slow maturing of certain tendencies within American culture itself, which parallel to some extent those of Europe. We are the direct heirs of the long British tradition in the philosophy and psychology of art. It has been, on the whole, one of naturalism and empiricism from Bacon and Hobbes [4] to Santayana; one of evolution, democracy, and liberalism from Herbert Spencer to John Dewey. Adverse theorists have attempted to discredit this tradition by identifying it with a few outworn ideas, such as Schiller's "play theory" of art, and with a narrow, sensual type of hedonism. These survivals of romanticism, and of the aristocractic conception of art for leisurely enjoyment, are not essential to the British naturalistic, evolutionary tradition in aesthetics. Its lasting value has been along other lines—for example, in leading to recent psychological and ethnological studies of art in various cultures.

Working in this philosophical tradition, the author of the present essay proposed in 1928 [5] a scientific, descriptive, naturalistic ap-

[4] C. D. Thorpe, *The Aesthetic Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1940).

[5] T. Munro, *Scientific Method in Aesthetics* (New York, 1928). (Reprinted in this volume, pp. 3ff.).

proach to aesthetics, one which should be broadly experimental and empirical but not limited to quantitative measurement, utilizing the insights of art criticism and philosophy as hypotheses, but deriving objective data from two main sources—the analysis and history of form in the arts, and psychological studies of the production, appreciation, and teaching of the arts. An empirical, relativistic approach to aesthetic valuation and value standards was also outlined. The analysis of form was broadly conceived, not as limited to the mere skeleton or external shell of the work of art, but as covering the organization of suggested meanings, emotions, and other components.

In 1928, the time was not yet ripe for concerted action along such lines in the United States; it had to wait another fourteen years.[6] Several writers had already attempted, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to establish aesthetics as an important subject in American scholarship. William Knight's *Philosophy of the Beautiful,* a history of aesthetics published by a Scottish writer in 1891-93, found much of interest in American writings on the subject from 1815 down to Ladd, Scott, Gayley, and the youthful John Dewey. Santayana's *Sense of Beauty* was a notable step toward a naturalistic, psychological orientation in 1896; it still retains considerable vitality. Max Dessoir presented a forward-looking paper on the "science of art" and its problems in St. Louis in 1904.[7] It has been almost completely ignored. Hugo Münsterberg made valiant efforts, in the early 1900's, to introduce German ideas on the psychology and teaching of art. They came to grief in 1914. Each similar attempt has suffered a setback, in part through wars and depressions; in part because conditions had not yet produced a widespread intellectual need for aesthetics in this country. That need is now arising, because of events to be described in the next section.

Before long, the history of aesthetics will have to be completely

[6] Date of organization, in Washington, D. C., of the American Society for Aesthetics. Preliminary conferences were reported in *The Future of Aesthetics: a Symposium on Possible Ways of Advancing Theoretical Studies of the Arts and Related Types of Experience,* ed. by T. Munro, (Cleveland, Ohio, 1942). See review by J. Alford, *Art Bulletin* (September, 1945).

[7] M. Dessoir, "The Fundamental Questions of Aesthetics," tr. by Ethel Puffer, *Congress of Arts and Science, Universal Exposition, St. Louis 1904* (Boston, 1905), pp. 434–447. Dessoir here credits Hugo Spitzer with beginning the scientific approach. See also Dessoir's "Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art in Contemporary Germany," *Monist,* XXXVI (1926), 299–310.

rewritten from a much more cosmopolitan point of view. It will have to include a great deal of important art criticism and aesthetic psychology, hitherto ignored in histories of criticism. Instead of following a single line of apostolic succession from Plato through Kant and Hegel to Croce and Bosanquet, it will have to consider much wise theorizing about the arts from China,[8] India,[9] Japan,[10] the Near East, Russia, and other cultures besides our own. Knight's *Philosophy of the Beautiful,* in 1891, was much more international in scope than either of the two large histories of aesthetics which have appeared in English since then. It contained chapters on the beginnings of aesthetics in prehistoric and Egyptian culture; on the classical and medieval periods; and on modern aesthetics in Germany, France, Italy, Holland, Britain, America, Russia, and Denmark. By contrast, Bosanquet's *History of Aesthetic,* which appeared in London in 1892 and has been scarcely altered since, is narrow and biased, ignoring not only American contributions but almost everything outside the German transcendentalist tradition, which Bosanquet admired. Dull and stodgy in treatment, it persistently omits the vital, stimulating, and colorful aspects of its subject matter, the discerning comments of great writers on art and artists, to plod through the endless course of pedantic speculation about the nature of Beauty. For the past five decades it has served as a wet blanket, to dampen the interest of students in aesthetics.

In view of all that had happened since 1892, there was even less excuse in 1939 for Gilbert and Kuhn's *History of Esthetic* to neglect or misrepresent American contributions to the field and all attempts at scientific method in aesthetics. Strongly German and anti-scientific in bias, it condescendingly dismissed not only American but French and British writings in the evolutionary, naturalistic tradition (e.g., Herbert Spencer and Grant Allen) with a few completely inadequate sentences. Santayana and Dewey together were given a total of four lines. Lalo, DeWitt Parker, Dessoir, Basch, and Delacroix were dis-

[8] E.g., translations by S. Sakanishi of Kuo Hsi, *An Essay on Landscape Painting* and *The Spirit of the Brush* (London, 1935, 1939). O. Siren, *The Chinese on the Art of Painting* (Peiping, 1936).

[9] G. C. O. Haas (tr.), Dhanamjaya's *Dasarupa: a Treatise on Hindu Dramaturgy,* (New York, 1912). A. Coomaraswamy, *The Mirror of Gesture* (New York, 1936). R. Mukerjee, *The Social Function of Art* (Bombay, 1948).

[10] K. Okakura, *The Book of Tea.* M. Anesaki, *Art, Life, and Nature in Japan* (Boston, 1932). L. Binyon, *The Flight of the Dragon* (London, 1911).

posed of together in four and a half lines. Dessoir and the whole "general science of art" movement received another four lines. In response to criticism, the second edition (1953) was revised by Mrs. Gilbert to include somewhat more attention to American and other naturalistic aesthetics, but the emphasis was still heavily on the older approaches. There is increasing need for an adequate, modern history of the subject, with due consideration of different schools of thought and of different national contributions.

Aesthetics as a whole is steadily becoming more international in scope. It has never been pervaded by narrow chauvinism or blindly worshipful patriotism. Its leaders have been, on the whole, philosophers with a broadly humanistic attitude. The few exceptions, as in certain Nazi and Soviet pronouncements on art, are taken seriously only as examples of political propaganda. But one could easily cite examples of leading art historians and philosophers of history whose racial and national pride has led them to exaggerate the importance of their own cultural background. If they were Germans, it has led them to regard all Gothic culture, or all modern Western, "Faustian," culture, as somehow peculiarly German in spirit. There have been Italian scholars so dazzled by the wealth and beauty of their own culture, with its roots in the classical past, as to ignore or minimize others. Such bias can produce a distorted view of art history and world civilization in which one's own spiritual ancestors are constantly brought to the center of the stage.

All aesthetic theory before the late nineteenth century was cramped and distorted by ignorance of exotic and primitive styles of art. In Renaissance humanism and by Winckelmann, it was based largely on the late Greek and Roman traditions in visual art and literature, and on the Renaissance styles which carried them on. Hegel regarded the art of advanced oriental civilizations condescendingly and superficially. Theories of the ideal and beautiful in art were founded mainly on late Greek principles of naturalistic representation, balance, and proportion. Gothic art was imitated at times, but was on the whole compared unfavorably with the classic. While there was so little to compete with classical art for admiration, one could easily erect it into an absolute norm of all that was good and beautiful; one could interpret all art history as a process of groping ascent from the "crude ugliness" of tribal and archaic art to the pinnacle of neo-classic refinement.

The enlargement of cultural horizons in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries has produced a revolutionary effect on recent aesthetics, making it not only international but intercultural in scope. The data for its generalizations are coming to be drawn from the artistic products and experiences of all peoples. We are rapidly losing the complacent assumption that Western styles of art are necessarily the best in all respects. In interpreting these data—for example, the significance of a Hindu statue—we are learning not to judge everything through modern Western eyes, but to understand what the statue meant to the culture which made it.[11]

One effect, inevitably, is to make aesthetic theory more *relativistic.* It seems more and more unreasonable to appraise the tremendous variety of styles by any one simple rule or fixed standard. More and more styles of art which do not conform to strict neo-classical rules are becoming accepted by critics, historians, art museums, and the public. It seems increasingly evident that each great historic style of art, however strange and repellent it may seem at first to untrained Western eyes, had its own functions and values—perhaps its own type of beauty—in its own cultural setting. Perhaps all these types of aesthetic value can be reduced to some one formula; if so, it will have to be an extremely broad and flexible one. For the present, there is more interest in observing and describing the infinite variety of ways in which art can be produced, used, regarded, and evaluated in different cultures.

It is interesting to compare the United States with France as to the relations between nationalism and internationalism. In some ways, France is highly cosmopolitan. As the capital of a colonial empire, and as the world's traditional artistic capital, Paris has long been a center for exotic arts and customs; a meeting-place of foreign artists and intellectuals. The Musée Guimet presents and interprets oriental art; the Musée de l'Homme, a variety of primitive cultures. Exotic dance and music programs, special exhibits, translations into French from every tongue, abound in Paris. The population of the United States is more heterogeneous racially, but its immigrant groups, coming mainly from underprivileged levels, have not always brought much of their native cultural riches with them. Too often

[11] As in A. Coomaraswamy's *The Dance of Siva* (New York, 1924); *Elements of Buddhist Iconography* (Cambridge, Mass., 1935); H. Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization* (New York, 1946).

they are quick to abandon what little they brought, and to imitate American ways. It is largely through other avenues of importation, on higher socio-economic levels, that America is becoming culturally cosmopolitan. Our élite groups who patronize and influence the arts are on the whole extremely receptive toward foreign novelties; all too ready to believe the foreign product better than their own; to admire each new imported style and praise the American artist when he imitates them. We eagerly import foreign scientific and philosophical movements, such as Freudian and Gestalt psychology, phenomenology, and logical positivism.

France, on the other hand, has a deeply ingrained confidence in the superiority of French art and philosophy. It accepts occasional contributions from abroad, always grafting them upon the native French tradition and domesticating them—as in the use by Matisse of certain traits from Persian painting. The French educational system is strongly centralized, rather inflexible, and strongly nationalistic, ever holding up the glories of the *grand siècle* to French youth. With Descartes and Pascal still glorified as examples of what philosophy should be today, it is hard for the French philosopher to escape old grooves of thought, and to attack twentieth-century problems in a twentieth-century way. The main current of French university philosophy, conservatively dualistic or idealistic, has paid little attention to the Freudian revolution in psychology or to the new emphasis on cultural psychology, derived from anthropological analysis of different culture patterns. Both of these are strongly influential in present American thought and especially in aesthetics. The conception that all philosophical beliefs, all artistic styles and value standards, all modes of thought and imagination are relative to human nature and are culturally conditioned—that none is absolutely right or final—is hard to grasp in a country where one great national philosophy has persistently striven, with considerable success, to reconcile in the public mind the march of scientific progress with the essentials of medieval Christianity. With no such awe-inspiring national heritage to boast of in American art and philosophy, the American thinker is perhaps more free to select from all traditions, to develop new patterns of culture. Only the future can show which background is more favorable to continued artistic and intellectual growth.

8. Growth of the arts and related activities in America

In most European centers of learning where aesthetics has been written and taught, great works of art have long been present. They surround the university student at Rome, Florence, Paris, London, Vienna, Munich, and Berlin. If he does not base his aesthetic theories on firsthand observation of great architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and theater, it is not for lack of opportunity. The art around him is sometimes limited in range of styles; for example, in Italy, where there is little oriental or primitive art to be seen. One's generalizations may suffer accordingly; but at least a few important examples are at hand for direct study. Not only finished works of art are there, but living artists in every medium. Art is, and has been for centuries, a vital activity by which people earn their living. The practice, enjoyment, and discussion of art have long been taken seriously as a valuable part of community life. All this provides an excellent foundation for aesthetic theory.

In America, most of the fine arts have been on a small scale until recent decades. The American artist in a visual medium had little opportunity to see great works of art in his own field except through an occasional trip to Europe, or in mediocre reproductions. Writers were much less cut off from the great traditions in their craft; Whitman could read the King James Bible. Even music scores could be easily imported, though orchestras were few. Today, though the fine arts are not yet part of the American scene as they are of the European, a tremendous advance has been made. Museums have multiplied in American cities, even the smaller ones, and stocked themselves with the world's treasures, expertly selected and exhibited, so as to astonish the foreign visitor. Motion picture films, radio, and television bring us music and drama (good and bad in quality), along with colorful scenes of foreign architecture, costume, and ceremonial. Books, public libraries, illustrated magazines bring us literature for every taste and age level, with photographic reproductions of the world's art. We design gardens, watch ballets, join amateur dance or handicraft clubs. Mass production brings good copies of museum pieces of furniture, pottery, and painting into modest homes. We are producing some original art, as in the film and architecture; how much or how good, it is hard for us to

say. But all the principal arts of Western civilization are now active here; their products are available for everyone to enjoy and study. We spend enormous sums on them, and multitudes of people make a living from them. As a result, the American critic, historian, and philosopher can now find concrete materials at hand for researches into the nature of art and artists. For the first time, aesthetics and art history can be studied in America, not in a purely bookish way, but through direct observation of a wide range of original works of art.

One accompaniment of the growth of art in America has been the growth of art *education;*[1] of instruction in all the arts, both in formal schools and courses, and in popular articles and lectures. These follow several different lines of approach. One emphasizes technical training in the *practice* of the arts; learning to be an artist. This includes all manner of schools, courses, and treatises intended to help one become a creative painter, sculptor, designer, architect, short story writer, playwright, actor, composer, or performer of music. Another type of education emphasizes the *appreciation,* enjoyment, and understanding of the arts. To satisfy this demand, museums establish gallery talks, courses, and public lectures; in print and over the air, critics explain current tendencies in the arts. A third type emphasizes *history* and chronological development; the characteristics of art in successive periods, and the contribution of individual artists, writers, or composers. Systematic study of this type reaches a comparatively small audience, mainly on the college level. Still another type emphasizes *educational methods;* it seeks to prepare teachers of a certain art. Ordinarily, such a course of study includes the philosophy and psychology of education, classroom management, and a little about the school curriculum on various levels, in addition to the practice and history of the art concerned. The training of a prospective college instructor usually differs from one on the secondary level in bringing in more history of the art and less educational method. It differs from that of an artist in having less intensive training in the technical use of the medium.

[1] G. Whipple (ed.), *Art in American Life and Education,* 40th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (Bloomington, Ill., 1941).

9. Specialization and synthesis

All these various approaches to the arts tend to be highly specialized in America today, and, on the whole, increasingly so. Above the early, elementary level, the arts are divided into separate courses and departments, with little co-operation between "art" (i.e., the visual arts), music, and literature. Literature is minutely subdivided according to language, nationality, and period, with little study of comparative literature aside from introductory courses on "world masterpieces." Specialization is least in the lowest grades of school, where one teacher often teaches all subjects. It is increasingly sharp from junior high school onward, where rigid departmentalization occurs. It is often extreme on the college and postgraduate levels, where the idea persists that one cannot be genuinely scholarly without narrowing down his interests, not only to a single subject such as the English novel, but to some narrow chronological and geographical subdivision within it. Advanced students are persistently discouraged, by the regulations for degrees and by faculty advisers, from trying to study the arts in a broad, comprehensive way, in relation to philosophy, psychology, sociology, and other subjects which might throw light upon them.

Most theoretical discussion of art is still limited by our compartmental system to a single art. This is true not only of education but of criticism, on both scholarly and journalistic levels. Music is considered by itself, theater by itself, painting by itself, and literature by itself. The results are often expert; and significant volumes on the aesthetics, psychology, or formal structure of a particular art are produced.[1] There are many advantages in such limits, but no art can be thoroughly understood in isolation. By seeing how they interact in every period, and how all spring from the same human nature, the same social settings, we can see more clearly the distinctive features of each. When the theory of each art proceeds along a separate line, ignoring the rest, it tends to develop its own jargon,

[1] C. C. Pratt, *The Meaning of Music* (New York, 1931). J. L. Mursell, *The Psychology of Music* (New York, 1937). G. Haydon, *Introduction to Musicology* (New York, 1946). L. Dudley, *The Study of Literature* (Boston, 1928). R. Wellek and A. Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York, 1942). D. Daiches, *A Study of Literature* (Ithaca, N. Y., 1948).

its own inbred provinciality. This may go on for generations without ever approaching a philosophic conception of the arts.

In some ways, the French educational system is even more deeply and rigidly specialized than ours, with ancient walls dividing it into compartments. There is little art or music in the liberal arts curriculum, even on the lower levels, and that little tends to be stiffly conventional. The idea of giving all students a basic acquaintance with the arts as part of a general education is scarcely discussed as yet. To pursue a systematic course of study in visual art or music, a student must concentrate early and intensively upon it, with little chance to study psychology or social science—all necessary for modern aesthetics. It is hard for him to change from one field to another. By contrast, the American system is much more flexible and experimental. Many institutions on all levels are trying new ways to interrelate the arts with other phases of general education. But it must always be remembered that the French student, especially in Paris, is less dependent on formal schooling for his aesthetic education: its materials are everywhere about him.

French education also has the admirable requirement of an introductory course in philosophy for most students on the secondary level. It is not quite satisfactory as to method and content to any school of thought. It is often taught with individual bias—Catholic, Marxist, or "Liberal." But it is fairly neutral and humanistic; it awakens the intelligent student, at an impressionable age, to the possibility of asking profound, far-reaching questions about life and the world. It shows the possibility of different answers, and invites him to attempt his own. Aesthetics is usually included; hence he learns at least that the subject exists. In training teachers of philosophy, still more attention is given to aesthetics. American public education, partly through fear of offending various religious groups, is sadly lacking in philosophical instruction. Hence most students lack this early impetus toward profound, unifying reflection on life, including its aesthetic phases. Even advanced American researchers in science and scholarship tend to lack philosophic depth and organizing power; to particularize excessively; to fear and neglect the task of large-scale integration.

The recent wave of specialization in studies of the arts is but one phase of a greater specializing trend which has swept through modern philosophy itself, as well as through aesthetics. Philosophy

since the eighteenth century, especially in England, has specialized so narrowly on the problems of knowledge and truth in epistemology and logic that some texts (e.g., Bertrand Russell's *The Problems of Philosophy*) give the impression that there are no other philosophical problems.

Increasing specialization has been one of the dominant trends in art itself during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For example, the painting of the late Renaissance masters was many-sided, appealing through both visual design and subject matter. It portrayed vast scenes of noble, mythological, or Biblical life, full of human interest; its visual effects were also vast and complex, through a synthesis of rhythmic line, color, mass, deep space, atmosphere, texture—nearly all of the painter's resources. Since then, there has been a tendency to specialize on visual form at the sacrifice of represented subject matter; and even to exploit one or a few visual components by themselves. This appears to an extreme in Picasso, who changes frequently from one avenue of experimentation to another: now to line alone, with no solid masses; now to bulky masses with no color; now to flat color pattern with no shading; now to abstract visual design; now to strong emotional expression, as in the "Guernica." This trend still dominates among individual artists; there are no Wagners today. But there are some opposing, reintegrative trends, as in the sound-color film, in the lyric theater with ballet, and in the new co-operation between design and utility, decoration and function, in the industrial arts.

Specialization has its obvious values, as a means to intensive research and experiment in both art and science. But it has to be supplemented by the integrative phase of thought and action for balanced development. Protests and counter-measures against excessive educational specialization have not been lacking.[2] Devices have been worked out for reintegrating the arts with each other and with the rest of the curriculum—for helping the student to realize how the arts are basically connected as parts of human life. One such device is the "project method," much practiced in the lower grades and to a less extent in secondary schools. It often takes the form of a theatrical production by groups of students, involving the

[2] L. Balet, "The History of Art of the Future," *J.A.A.C.* (Fall, 1941), 42–62. E. Winternitz, "Overspecialization and Art Education," Association of American Colleges *Bulletin,* XXVIII:2 (May, 1942), 276–282.

preparation of a script based on some historical or literary subject which is being studied. In addition, it may involve the designing and making of costumes and scenery, the composition and performance of music and dancing, and stage direction by students under faculty guidance. Most school projects, of course, are much simpler and more limited in diversity of mediums. Another countermeasure against educational specialization has been the "orientation course," or broad survey course on the humanities, the arts in modern life, contemporary civilization, or a topic of similar breadth. Such courses are always difficult to organize and teach, especially when they must be taught by specialists from different departments of the faculty: one section of the course being given by the music department, another by the art department, and so on.

Another difficulty in organizing orientation courses on the arts is the lack of any accepted theoretical basis for them. Even on the level of advanced theory, the relations between the arts have not been much discussed in this country. It is therefore doubly hard for teachers to agree on any way of presenting them in a comprehensive, systematic way on an introductory level. There is urgent need at present, in American education, for a workable philosophy of art, and for theoretical guidance in developing the arts as a part of liberal education for all age levels.

The recent growth of interest in comparative aesthetics is due partly to a widespread belief, among teachers and students of the arts, that specialization has gone too far. Aesthetics is traditionally supposed to give a comprehensive, philosophical interpretation of the arts; hence persons from all walks of life are turning to it for enlightenment. Philosophers, they assume, ought to have something profoundly illuminating to say on this as on other matters.

Unfortunately, these flattering expectations are too often disappointed. There has always been, and still is, a great gulf between philosophical aesthetics and the arts themselves. A person may study the former for years in an American philosophy department without having to examine a single work of art. As in Europe, aesthetics here has usually emphasized highly general problems concerning the nature of art, beauty, and aesthetic value. Aesthetics of this narrow, traditional sort has always failed to interest many college students, or to satisfy the inquiring layman. They find in it, not a unifying approach to the arts, but another highly specialized little subject,

off in a corner by itself, devoted to endless debate over small technicalities.

To be sure, there is room in aesthetics for intensive researches as well as general syntheses. But the latter are most urgently needed at present, in liberal education and by the general public. They are needed especially in the English-speaking countries, because of the extreme pluralism and disunity of our intellectual life. Reacting against grandiose aesthetic systems of the German type, many of our philosophers have gone to the opposite extreme, avoiding even that minimum of broadly systematic thinking which is essential to a rational world view, and which has been philosophy's distinctive contribution in the past. In a period of rapid cultural change and mixture, when science is discovering particular facts at unparalleled speed, there is urgent need for the large-scale, organizing phase of philosophic thinking.

Much that passes for philosophy today, and that is written by professional philosophers, does not deserve the name because of its minute specialization. It should be classed rather as science or historical scholarship. There is need for intensive, semantic researches on the meanings of "beauty," but these are not a substitute for the vitally needed, comprehensive interpretation of the arts. One school of philosophy is now attempting an approach to aesthetics in terms of semantics and semiotics.[3] So far, it has been narrowly preoccupied with a few selected aspects of art: especially its relation to other kinds of symbol, sign, and meaning. Important conclusions may emerge. But obviously, this so-called "philosophical" approach is only one more highly specialized inquiry concerned with certain abstract characteristics of thought and communication. It makes no attempt to deal philosophically with the whole realm of art and aesthetic experience, or with the central, distinctive problems arising therein.

In the twentieth century, Santayana is the only American philosopher who has produced any approach to a full-scale philosophic system with a place for the arts, and he has written little about them since *Reason in Art* appeared in 1905. Literature is the only art about which he has written with authority. Dewey, our other front-rank philosopher, has consciously avoided system-building. In *Ex-*

[3] M. Rieser, "Brief Introduction to an Epistemology of Art," *Journal of Philosophy,* XLVII:24 (November 23, 1950), 695.

perience and Nature and *Art as Experience,* his far-ranging commentary on human life was extended, late in his own life, to deal with the aesthetic realm. He praises the concrete, specific approach in philosophy, but most of his comments on the arts are abstract and general. In the present generation, we have produced no comprehensive examination of the arts which is comparable in scope to G. L. Raymond's huge series on comparative aesthetics written at Princeton during the eighteen-nineties. Obsolete in many respects today, it still sets an example as a large-scale application of theory to copious illustrations from the arts. T. M. Greene's substantial volume on *The Arts and the Art of Criticism* (1940) is one of the few recent attempts in America at a comprehensive, philosophical survey of the arts. Stephen C. Pepper has worked out a flexible systematization through pointing out the aesthetic and critical implications of different philosophical world views, especially the empirical, naturalistic approach, with detailed analytical references to works of art.[4] The author's recent book, *The Arts and their Interrelations,* is an attempt at synthesis from the standpoint of comparison and classification of the arts.[5]

A number of recent American books have undertaken to present a comprehensive survey of the arts. Almost all have been on the level of introductory college textbooks or popular outlines for the general reader.[6] Some adopt the historical approach, some that of appreciation and criticism. They help to satisfy educational needs and to build a larger public for aesthetics. Simple language is not necessarily a bar to good thinking, and some of these popular books contain fresh, enlightening interpretations. But they are under great pressure from publishers to be brief, entertaining, and untechnical, to avoid long analyses and erudite allusions. Hence they are often superficial and misleading, confirming the specialist's prejudice against any attempt to deal with art extensively.

The characteristic British, French, and American antipathy to system-building has the virtues of all liberalism: avoidance of repressive, inadequate formulas; encouragement of flexible, tentative

[4] *World Hypotheses* (Berkeley, Calif., 1942). *The Basis of Criticism in the Arts* (Cambridge, Mass., 1949). *Principles of Art Appreciation* (New York, 1949).

[5] New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1949.

[6] L. Dudley and A. Faricy, *The Humanities: Applied Aesthetics* (New York, 1940).

exploration along many lines. The history of philosophy is strewn with giant fossils of dead systems whose grandiose pretensions make them now appear as more colossal failures than an equally dead short essay. German philosophers dared to build these many-volumed monsters until recent years, and their fate—in addition to their cost in work and money—has been a grim deterrent to most would-be system-builders. These motives have been reinforced in England by the national love of reticent understatement, of dismissing the weightiest, the most poignant subjects in a few clipped, casual phrases. "One could easily say more," is the implication; "but what a bore it would become, and what a vulgar parade of learning!" Especially in matters of aesthetic and personal emotion, where the less said, the better. So the more that might be said is never said, and the fragmentary hints never grow into mature, sustained philosophizing.

There are many intermediate stages between extreme specialization on one hand, and grandiose, all-embracing systems on the other. Synthetic and sometimes philosophic thinking can be done on a much smaller scale, as when a historian uses insights from both psychology and economics to explain what happened in fifteenth-century Florence; or when the archaeologist asks help from geology, chemistry, and botany in determining the date of a neolithic burial. Intellectual synthesis may consist in linking a single change in musical style with a contemporary change in painting or poetry, or with a social or religious movement.

Some philosophers use a significant, key idea of the time to link together and explain phenomena from widely distant fields. In the nineteenth century, "evolution" was such a key idea, and much of the world's best philosophizing on art and other matters was linked up with it. It served to stimulate and suggest inquiry in every subject. Today, no single concept holds so central a place in our thinking, but certainly that of symbolism is near the focus. As Susanne K. Langer [7] has pointed out, it has important bearings in contemporary logic, semantics, language, psychology, religion and ritual, visual art, literature, music, and ethics. Thinkers in fields as remote as psychoanalysis, ethnology, and the history of Renaissance painting

[7] S. K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key, a Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite and Art* (Cambridge, Mass., 1942). R. Bernheimer, "Concerning Symbols," *Art: a Bryn Mawr Symposium* (Bryn Mawr, Pa., 1940).

(as in the Warburg Institute researches) find themselves organizing their discoveries in terms of symbols and meanings—individual and cultural, conscious and unconscious, words and concrete images. Philosophical synthesis can be exercised with such new tools on a moderate scale: e.g., by combining the insights of psychoanalysis and art history or literary scholarship on the symbolism of a single work of art, such as *Hamlet* or *Ulysses,* Dürer's *Melancolia,* or Goya's *Foolish Fury.*[8] Such co-operation is welcomed, not by aesthetics alone, but by each co-operating specialist. The psychoanalyst today looks to the arts as a rich source of data for understanding the human mind, but he cannot exploit it without some help from experts in the field of art.

Every job of synthesis well done has far-reaching repercussions. For example, it was mentioned above that recent art and art criticism had shown a tendency to specialize on "pure form"—i.e., on the visual or auditory aspects of painting, music, or poetry; and to disparage "sentimental associations." This was a fruitful temporary line of experimentation. But now, we are discovering that art can have a wealth of other, unsuspected meanings, of many different kinds. This in turn affects the kind of art produced. Surrealists and other modernists are trying to exploit such meanings (e.g., unconscious, dream symbolism) as a source of interest and emotional power.

10. The joining of several streams of thought in present aesthetics

There has been a marked change in American aesthetics in recent years. It is branching out vigorously to include more study of the arts themselves, as well as of theories about them. It is now commonly conceived as the subject which seeks to *describe and explain, in a broadly theoretical way, the arts and related types of behavior and experience.* It considers the aesthetic experience of nature and of other types of object in addition to works of art. It is no longer a mere branch of speculative philosophy, since it incorporates many data and methods from the sciences, as well as from direct observation of aesthetic phenomena. It has not abandoned the traditional, philosophical approach, emphasizing beauty and value; but it also

[8] F. S. Wight, "The Revulsions of Goya: Subconscious Communications in the Etchings," *J.A.A.C.,* V:1 (September, 1946), 1–28.

takes in what Dessoir and his associates called *allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft,* or general science of art.[1] This comprises the more fundamental, broadly comparative, and philosophical areas of *Kunstwissenschaft,* or scholarly research in the arts. Aesthetics covers also the more philosophical areas of art criticism, of the psychology of art, of the sociology and ethnology of art, and of all other subjects touching upon the arts and related types of behavior and experience. From these it accepts both generalizations and examples which cast important light upon its own main problems. Each of these contributory subjects has other areas, less general and fundamental—for example, ordinary journalistic criticism of day-to-day theatrical and musical performances—which are more remote from aesthetics. The outer boundaries of aesthetics are indefinite, but its central core consists of theoretical studies which select, co-ordinate, and interpret relevant facts and hypotheses from all sources about works of art and those who make, perform, and use them.

Within the enlarged subject of aesthetics, the various approaches are not completely merged. Co-operation is being achieved, but not the elimination of all differences in method or opinion. Let us notice some of these different approaches within the total field.

11. The philosophy of art and beauty

Modern aesthetics as a whole is philosophical in stressing broad, fundamental generalizations; but some approaches within it are more philosophical than others. "Philosophy of art" is not a synonym for aesthetics as a whole; it suggests the more traditional, speculative types of aesthetic theory, in contrast to the scientific approach. It is still active today, and its work is by no means finished.

One of the perennial functions of philosophy is to precede and anticipate science; to explore by guesswork and surmise realms of the universe which science cannot, so far, effectively penetrate. The philosopher adds up and weighs the unsystematic observations and experiences of his time and social group; their opinions and imaginings about the nature of things. He raises problems where others have distinguished none; thinks out the possible alternative answers,

[1] M. Dessoir, *Aesthetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1906, 1923). Cf. C. J. Ducasse, "Aesthetics and the Aesthetic Activities," *J.A.A.C.,* V:3 (March, 1947), 165–177.

and tells which seem to him most reasonable or most admirable. He shares to some degree their prejudices and unconscious motives; he expresses the limited outlook of his cultural group; but he rises to a broader vision of the world and humanity, and rationalizes his conclusions more systematically than ordinary persons do. It is characteristic of philosophers, as of art critics, to mingle judgments of fact with judgments of value; to describe the nature of the world as they see it, and also to say what is good or bad, beautiful or ugly, according to their standards.

Most of the great occidental philosophers from the time of Socrates to the present, and many oriental sages as well, have had something to say about art and about the contemplation of beauty. They often discussed these subjects along with others, or as part of a systematic theory of the universe. Thus the "philosophy of art" is not a distinct subject or body of writing, but a recurrent theme of philosophy in general. The distinction between "fine" and "useful" arts was not widely made until the eighteenth century. Before then, "art" covered all useful skills, including those which aimed at beauty (along with other ends) and those of more purely utilitarian nature, such as iron mining. Even though the "fine arts," including music, poetry, and the visual arts, were not clearly recognized as a class apart, philosophers discussed them in a general way. Plato and Aristotle both discussed the functions, values, and good and bad effects which music could have in society, and advanced criteria for judging music to be good or bad. Beauty and sensuous pleasure were considered, among other effects of art, such as the moral and intellectual. St. Augustine feared the moral and spiritual dangers of sensuous beauty in art.

Such philosophizing involved some factual description of the general characteristics of the arts and of certain styles, such as the "soft Lydian airs" of music. It also involved the evaluation of art as good or bad, and the setting up of general norms. It involved penetrating insights into the psychology of art production and aesthetic experience, as in the theories of catharsis and divine madness. This too was mixed with dogmatic appraisals of different kinds of artist and mental attitude as good or bad. There was no systematic attempt, until modern times, at objective, factual accounts of art or aesthetic psychology which would avoid evaluative judgments. Philosophers rationalized their appraisals in accordance with their religious, metaphysical, and moral assumptions. Nevertheless, we now see that these

appraisals were all conditioned by the cultural environment in which the philosopher lived, and by his individual personality. For example, Plato's philosophy was conditioned by the small, city-state culture of his time, and by the fact that his beloved teacher was executed by the Athenian populace. His greatness enabled him to rise above local, temporary conditions more than most other men have, so that his judgments are often acceptable to people in other cultures; they seem perennially enlightening whether one agrees with them fully or not.

Plato's meditations, and those of other great philosophers of art, are important for aesthetics today in two principal ways: (a) as historical and psychological phenomena; as evidence of ways in which the arts were regarded in different cultures, and by different types of individual; (b) as hypotheses to guide further investigation; the insights of early wise men being often far ahead of science in certain respects, suggesting theories which science later verifies in part.

The development of a scientific approach to art and aesthetics, as described in this article, does not mean that the philosophical approach is becoming outmoded or unnecessary. The two are and should be supplementary. But the highly abstract, speculative approach has too long monopolized the field of aesthetics; it must now make room for others. It is only the *a priori,* dogmatic, and transcendentalist schools of philosophy, which scorn to co-operate with natural science, that are becoming obsolete. Between scientific aesthetics and a naturalistic, empirical philosophy of art, there is no quarrel whatever. For example, the influence of Dilthey's empiricism and his theory of world views, which coincide in many ways with the teachings of John Dewey, is increasing in American aesthetics.[1]

In America, George Santayana's *Reason in Art* and Dewey's *Art as Experience* belong in the category of "philosophy of art" rather than in "science of art." They are full of philosophical wisdom and insight; they discuss the varieties of form and experience in the arts with some fullness, instead of confining themselves to empty generalities about beauty. In such discussion, they constantly blend evaluation with description of observable facts. Their methods are those of the philosopher and not of the scientist, with many sweeping statements which appeal to the reason and cultivated taste of

[1] H. A. Hodges, *Wilhelm Dilthey, an Introduction* (London, 1944).

the reader, but do not attempt demonstration through detailed experiment of specific evidence. At the same time, they incorporate some of the scientific information of their day about the psychology and sociology of the arts.

It is comparatively easy to work out a broadly synthetic theory of the arts on a personal, subjective basis; that is, for the philosopher to say what the arts mean *to him*. Much past philosophy of art has really been of this type, although put forward as objectively true. It is a harder task to work out a theory on a more objective or inter-subjective basis, through co-ordinating recent scientific knowledge and theory from a great variety of sources. Most American writing in aesthetics is still somewhere between the two: rather personal and dogmatic in attitude, yet with some effort to apply the latest scientific concepts. Many readers are satisfied with this informal combination. Some prefer the frankly personal expression, the "adventures of a soul among masterpieces." Others wish to see aesthetics become still more scientific and objective, even though it cannot be completely so.

12. The criticism of art

Closely akin to "philosophy of art" is the more general, theoretical type of criticism and informal psychologizing by essayists, artists, historians, and biographers of the arts. Here we may place the more theoretical writings of such American artists as Whistler and Frank Lloyd Wright, such critics and historians as Henry Adams and Bernard Berenson. Such writings are on the whole a mixture of verifiable knowledge with personal attitudes, tastes, and prejudices which express the period, nationality, class, and individual make-up of the writer. They too are of value today, both as historical and psychological data and as suggestive hypotheses.

In America, much criticism of the arts has been shallow, ephemeral journalism or pedantic, historical scholarship; in either case devoid of philosophic breadth and penetration. France has had its share of both these types, but has also had in more abundance the critic who is also a gifted man of letters: a poet, painter, novelist, or composer—a Baudelaire, Flaubert, Anatole France, Debussy, Delacroix, Valéry, Malraux, or Sartre, who can write gracefully, wisely, or wittily about some art in addition to practicing it. His theoretical

comments are intensely personal, never very systematic, often brilliant and profound, but far removed from plodding scientific analysis. The seductive glamor of this approach to aesthetics has done much to discourage the scientific approach in France, and to a less extent in England and America. Raymond Bayer, in his "Recent Aesthetic Thought in France," [1] notes the "invasion of aesthetics by literary matters" as "philosophy and literature become more and more confused and intertwined with each other." He believes that a positive and formed aesthetics will offer methodical resistance to the "suggestive and sporadic aesthetics of literary aestheticism." Clever, casual essay writing about art can achieve fine literary art in its own right, with occasional deep insights, but not the continuous development of tested knowledge. When the aesthetician tries to create art at the same time that he explains it, he risks doing neither very well. He must be ever watchful of his style and cleverness, ever careful not to be dull or boresome for a moment. Unfortunately, science often has to be dull and boresome in its endless scrutiny of details, its dogged pursuit of a single train of thought far beyond the point where it ceases to be amusing. Masquerading as aesthetic science, urbane and witty generalities about art and artists often tend (as in France today) to conceal the scarcity of genuine scientific inquiry in the field.[2] The latter must follow its own more sober course if it is to get anywhere.

Again, this is not to say that aesthetics should sever all relations with art criticism or with literary discussions of art. It will always find there valuable data for analysis, in the shape of recorded experiences with art, individual and cultural attitudes toward art, the processes of forming, applying, and revising standards of value. More and more critics today approach their problems in a partly scientific spirit, with some awareness of theoretical advance in fields related to their own. With these aesthetics will continue to cooperate.

[1] M. Farber (ed.), *Philosophic Thought in France and the United States,* p. 272.

[2] Malraux's *Psychology of Art* was not a psychology of art. The title was changed to *Voices of Silence* in a later edition.

13. Aesthetics in the narrow sense, as theory of beauty

Through a series of technical discussions in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century German philosophy the word "aesthetics" came into use, derived from the Greek word for "perception." Originally referring to sensuous knowledge, it came to signify a branch of philosophy concerned with beauty, especially in the fine arts, but also in nature.

In the works of some philosophers, "aesthetics" covered a wide field, identical with "philosophy of art" as just described; that is, it considered the particular arts. Hegel made it cover a philosophy of art history. On the whole, however, the tendency was to narrow "aesthetics" down to the single problem of beauty and aesthetic value; [1] to the question of whether judgments of value and claims to superior taste in art have any objective basis, or rest on mere personal preference; also to the relations between aesthetic value, moral value, and metaphysics. Whereas the philosophy of art had included much theorizing on the facts of art, aesthetics in this narrow sense became largely normative, neglecting problems of art history and psychology. Theories of beauty and aesthetic value ranged from extreme absolutism and religious dogmatism to extreme relativism and naturalism. Leaders in the naturalistic approach, especially in England, were mostly hedonists, emphasizing sensuous pleasure as a standard of value. In Germany, the leading philosophers were mostly idealists, emphasizing the role of art as an expression of the cosmic mind.

14. So-called "experimental aesthetics"; the laboratory or psychometric approach to the psychology of beauty and aesthetic preference

This branch of aesthetics has also been largely concerned with the nature of beauty, sensory pleasure, and aesthetic evaluation. But its methods have been more descriptive, factual, empirical, and quantitative. As a rule, it does not make or defend evaluative judg-

[1] André Lalande, in his widely-used *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie* (Paris, 1947), p. 291, repeats the traditional definition of *esthétique* as *"Science ayant pour objet le jugement d'appréciation en tant qu'il s'applique à la distinction du Beau et du Laid."*

ments about art, but observes and describes certain external aspects of evaluation. It tries to ascertain in an open-minded way what people actually consider beautiful. Occasionally, evaluative assumptions are concealed in a mass of statistical details. This occurs when the investigator assumes that majority preference actually makes a thing more beautiful; or when he assumes that certain "experts" really know what is best, and then judges people's taste as good or bad, according to whether they agree with the experts.

Psychometric aesthetics (a more exact term than "experimental") follows the lead of Fechner, whose *Vorschule der Aesthetik* in 1876 helped bring about the experimental approach to general psychology. It emphasizes statistical studies of aesthetic preference, especially of what kinds of visible shape, proportion, and color combination are considered most beautiful or pleasing by the greatest number of persons. The objects to be judged are usually not complete works of art, but simple geometrical figures, arrangements of dots or strips of color, etc. Hence this approach is, in its own way, almost as abstract as the philosophical theories of beauty. Supposedly, Fechner's approach was "from below," or from empirical data; but in practice it has paid little attention to the complex types of form which are actually encountered in art and nature. Its data consist rather in certain behavioristic responses, expressions of preference by the persons tested.

In the early twentieth century, Fechner's approach was actively pursued in the United States by Witmer and others. It has weakened in recent years. In experimental psychology, now a huge, diversified science, quantitative researches are still occasionally done on problems related to art and aesthetic preference.[1] The psychometric approach is only one small element in the contribution of psychology to modern aesthetics, and in the scientific approach to aesthetics.

[1] H. S. Langfeld, "Aesthetics, Experimental," *Encyclopedia Britannica,* 14th ed. P. R. Farnsworth, "Aesthetics, Psychology of," in *Encyclopedia of Psychology* (New York, 1946). A. R. Chandler, *Beauty and Human Nature* (New York, 1934). R. M. Ogden, *The Psychology of Art* (New York, 1938).

15. Tests and measurements in the field of art

A special application of the psychometric approach is that of standardized test devices which claim to measure and rate the individual's taste or judgment of values in art, or even his aptitude for becoming a creative artist.[1] They are especially popular in American education, where standardized tests of intelligence, aptitude, and achievement in other fields have been used with some success. There is continuous demand for them in art education, and new ones are constantly appearing on the market. In general, Americans have great faith in standardized mass-production methods, in applied science, and in anything presented with imposing claims to scientific, mathematical accuracy, however superficial that scientific air may be. Such tests usually present the subject with pairs of pictures or other art works (garments, room interiors, etc.) and ask him to tell which he prefers, or which is "better." The test assumes that one of each pair is objectively better, and that a subject who prefers the other is "wrong," or has inferior taste. Supposedly correct choices are obtained as a rule from a consensus of supposed "experts" selected by the author of the test, or by taking well-known pictures, passages of music, etc., and altering them to produce a "spoiled" version. Sometimes vague, high-sounding "art principles" such as unity, balance, and rhythm are invoked, with no recognition of the problems involved in applying them correctly. The usual effect of such tests is to penalize all deviation from adult, conventional norms of taste in that particular environment, since the student who perfers the "right" examples gets a high grade. The relativity of aesthetic values is ignored, no allowance being made for legitimate differences in taste and style (e.g., for variations according to age and cultural background), or for the fact that different art forms may be desirable under different circumstances. Some credulous teachers use them with harmful results for students; others become skeptical about all attempts at measurement in the aesthetic field.

When less exaggerated claims are made, statistical methods can be

[1] For a critique of such tests, see the author's "Art Tests and Research in Art Education," Western Arts Association *Bulletin,* XVII:6 (December 1, 1933). Cf. M. Graves, "How Artistic Are You?" *Reader's Digest* (December, 1950), p. 73.

used to advantage in analyzing tastes and works of art. Unwarranted claims to appraise art ability, taste, or value in general can and should be avoided. Instead, the test can deal with more specific, factual matters: e.g., *differences* in taste without inferring that some are "better" than others; specific effects of altering a work of art in various ways; specific abilities such as "absolute pitch" and power to perceive and remember visual patterns. In addition, the techniques of educational measurement can be used to aid the teacher in making his admittedly subjective, arbitrary judgments (as in the necessary grading of students' work) a little more clear and careful, with explicit recognition of debatable criteria, and no claims to absolute finality.

16. Kunstwissenschaft; science or knowledge of art

This movement has consisted largely in historical studies of the visual arts. It includes such related subjects as determining the authenticity, date, and provenance of a work of art. It differs from "philosophy of art" not only in being thus restricted, but in being more neutrally descriptive in aim; it seeks to ascertain the facts rather than to appraise them. As distinguished from the earlier art history and from art criticism, it aims at objectivity and generalization, describing styles as historical facts without assuming or arguing that one is better than another. Much of it has been minutely specialized art history devoted to ascertaining and recording particular facts, such as the date and origin of a certain work of art. There is no clear distinction between *Kunstwissenschaft* and *Kunstgeschichte,* and many scholars in art prefer the latter name.[1] Scientific methods can be used, of course, in discovering particular facts as well as general principles. At times, *Kunstwissenschaft* rises toward theory in generalizing on the stylistic traits of certain periods in art, and in explaining them as different ways of seeing the world.

A leader in this movement was Conrad Fiedler (1841-1895). Says L. Venturi, "He renounced reflections on the beautiful to occupy

[1] The *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* began publication in 1876 in Stuttgart, under the editorship of Franz Schestag, a Vienna museum curator, as an outgrowth of the first congress on *Kunstwissenschaft,* held in Vienna in 1873. Its pages have been devoted more to specialized history than to theory.

himself only with art, and in that way he is the founder of the science of art, distinct from aesthetics." [2] Riegl and Wölfflin carried on this approach, the latter's "principles of art history" being widely influential. Wölfflin, in Venturi's opinion, lacks "the comprehensive universality which is the greatest glory of Riegl." But both are philosophic in scope. They combine intensive historical knowledge with the power to compare and generalize widely and deeply. In this respect, theoretical *Kunstwissenschaft* is in the tradition which Hegel started with his philosophy of history, including the history of art and the development of styles. But it is more empirical and inductive; less concerned with values; less metaphysical. It proceeds from detailed, comparative analysis of many particular works of art whose chronological and geographical origins are known, so that generalizations on stylistic change can be made. It is directly indebted to Burckhardt, historian of the Renaissance, who wrote to Wölfflin in 1879 about the need for "finding exact formulas for the living laws of the forms."

17. Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft; general science of art

Much *Kunstwissenschaft,* as we have seen, is highly specialized and remote from aesthetic theory. But it provides another source of data; hence the possibility of another kind of aesthetics "from below," rising into general theory from concrete works of art and historical knowledge about them, not (as in Fechner's approach) from statistics about preference in artificial, laboratory tests.

It is a long way, as to degree of generality, from the details of art history to philosophical aesthetics. Hence, Max Dessoir believed, there was need for an intermediate realm of *allgemeine,* or general *Kunstwissenschaft.*[1] It should continue to be scientific, objective, and descriptive, not indulging in dogmatic appraisal or vague speculation about beauty. It should be concerned with all the arts, including music and literature, and with comparisons between the

[2] L. Venturi, *History of Art Criticism* (New York, 1936), p. 278f., 229. Taine had previously proclaimed a scientific approach to art, says Venturi, but had not avoided all evaluation. C. Fiedler, *On Judging Works of Visual Art* (Berkeley, Calif., 1949), tr. with introduction by H. Schaefer-Simmern.

[1] M. Dessoir, *op. cit.,* and *Beiträge zur allgemeinen Kunstwissenschaft* (Stuttgart, 1929).

arts; not with the visual arts alone. Dessoir and his group sought to build a firm bridge of verifiable knowledge from the particulars of art to the philosophy of art—not a shaky, overextended one like Spengler's philosophy of history. Solid supports could be found in generalizations of intermediate scope. Objective studies of intermediate breadth were being made on the art and intellectual history of different periods; for example, on the blend of Greek, Hebrew, and Christian symbolism in Michelangelo. Steps were made toward comparative aesthetics, as in extending Wölfflin's theory of the difference between classic and baroque from visual art to music and literature. The pages of Dessoir's *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* and the programs of the meetings he inspired were hospitable toward a great variety of subjects and opinions which seemed to bear directly or indirectly on the understanding of the arts. They included a great many specialized studies of artists and works of art. They included research on the psychology of art, along many lines. Dessoir himself emphasized the psychology of the artist, and of creative imagination. Thus the "general science of art" opened its doors to all other scientific studies of the arts besides the historical one.

There was much discussion in Germany as to whether "aesthetics" and "general science of art" should be considered one subject, or two allied ones. Dessoir and his friends chose the latter alternative, assuming that the traditional, narrow definition of aesthetics as philosophy of beauty was too firmly fixed to be altered. That definition was too narrow to cover all the newer, more descriptive studies of the arts and aesthetic experience; hence the other name must be added to cover them. At the same time, the constant coupling of the two names, "aesthetics and general science of art," implied also the existence of a new, broad field including them both. The union thus attempted under the double title was not only a union of ideas, an abstract realm of knowledge; it was a plan for active co-operation among scholars in separate academic realms. In Germany as in the United States, the gulf between various approaches to the arts is widened by divisions in academic, professional organization, especially in university and technical faculties. Theoretically, it seems easy to focus many different viewpoints on the study of the arts; actually, one must bridge or break down innumerable departmental fences, the result of modern specialized education and research. The pro-

fessors of philosophy, the artists, art historians, and critics of the arts must all be drawn out of their exclusive workrooms and induced to collaborate with each other. Borderline studies must be made, and borderline professorships established. New societies, periodicals, and series of monographs are practical means to that end. Dessoir's double title gave a reassuring platform whereon many types of modern scholar could meet and work together, without seeming to abandon their own special approaches, or be absorbed into the old-fashioned "philosophy of beauty."

There are other dangers, Dessoir and his friends believed, in calling the combined field "aesthetics." It might seem to imply that art was nothing but the manifestation of beauty or that the only way of experiencing art was as a source of aesthetic pleasure. Such implications they strongly rejected, being impressed by the great variety of functions which art has exercised and the importance of studying them open-mindedly. Emphasis on beauty, they felt, stressed the appreciator's point of view at the expense of the artist's. Moreover, "beauty" was apt to be interpreted as "classical beauty," in accordance with the Winckelmann tradition. Many other types of art, oriental and primitive, which classical taste condemned as ugly, must also receive unprejudiced study by the science of art.

The current tendency in France and America is away from Dessoir's double title, and toward including both subjects under the single name "aesthetics." Emil Utitz, an associate of Dessoir's, does not insist on maintaining the distinction between them. In a recent letter to the author, he wrote, "I completely agree with you when you say: 'The important thing is to have an active discipline concerned with factual, scientific studies of the arts from many points of view—psychological, sociological, religious, and other—whether it be distinguished from aesthetics or included in a broader concept of aesthetics.' "

The French society, which was organized before the second world war as *L'Association pour l'Étude des Arts et les Recherches relatives à la Science de l'Art,* was dormant during the war. It was revived in 1945 under the simple title, *Société Française d'Esthétique.* Its quarterly magazine began publication in 1948 under the title *Revue d'Esthétique.* The list of topics discussed by both the French and the American Society and periodical makes it clear that "science of art" is now covered by the single word "aesthetics." The term *allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* and its English translation, "general science of

art," have never found much favor in the United States. They are cumbersome and raise unnecessary controversy over whether there can be a "science" of art, strictly speaking. Some prefer "philosophy of art," but that term suggests the old, restricted status of the subject as a branch or application of philosophy. It seems to deny the subject's modern aspiration to be a distinct, major field of investigation, based on observation of the arts rather than on deduction from philosophical principles, and co-operating with the sciences quite as much as with specialized philosophy.

The very fact that aesthetics as a subject has been so undeveloped in America has prevented its name from acquiring the definite meaning, restricted to the philosophy of beauty, which Dessoir and his friends found obstructive. It is correspondingly easier, for those who now seek to establish it as an important subject in American higher education, to give the word "aesthetics" the newer, broader interpretation. Only a few American writers [2] have sought to preserve the sharp distinction between aesthetics and the science or philosophy of art. Of course, if we could start with a clean slate, it would not be hard to find a better name than "aesthetics," with its many confusing associations. But it is fairly well established in the broader sense, and it would be difficult to substitute a new name.

Flexibility in changing the names and scope of academic subjects is characteristic of the American educational system. In Germany and France, where universities have long been under strongly centralized state control, such changes are more difficult. Here it is comparatively easy to establish a new subject, department, or professorial chair, or to work out informal, co-operative courses between different departments. In Germany, where aesthetics had considerable academic prestige, it was usually taught by a full professor as a branch of systematic philosophy. Special courses on it were usually given by instructors of lower rank. Little or no recognition was given to *allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* as a definite university subject. In spite of the great theoretical advances made by Dessoir and his group, and their success in building up a miscellaneous public interested in the "general science of art," neither they nor the French had gone very far before World War II in establishing it as a major academic subject.

[2] E.g., H. Kuhn in "Philosophy of Art" and D. H. Parker on "Aesthetics," in *Encyclopedia of the Arts* (New York, 1946), pp. 741, 14.

18. French, English, and recent German contributions

It would be going too far to give the Germans full credit for it, or for the scientific, naturalistic approach to aesthetics. French, English, and American scholars during the past seventy-five years have done a tremendous amount of objective research in the history of all the arts, and in the description of styles, which parallels the *Kunstwissenschaft* movement in Germany. The French have their own scientific tradition in aesthetics, stemming largely from Comte, Taine, and Véron. Taine stated its objectives clearly in the first of his lectures on *The Philosophy of Art,* delivered in 1864, and thus antedating the German leaders in *Kunstwissenschaft.*[1] Hennequin, Galabert, and others in the nineties outlined further approaches to scientific aesthetics, such as *esthopsychologie,* or aesthetic psychology: "the science of works of art considered as psychological documents concerning their authors or the public which admired them.[2] Paul Valéry and Victor Basch, on the eve of World War II, opened the Second International Congress on Aesthetics and the Science of Art by pointing out the ways in which aesthetics can make use of scientific aid in attacking its own central problems, such as the nature and conditions of aesthetic pleasure, and the "laws" or recurrences in art history.[3] Charles Lalo discussed the methodology of a broadly

[1] The aim was "defining the nature and marking the conditions of existence of each art." Such a study "imposes no precepts, but ascertains and verifies laws." It "considers human productions, and particularly works of art, as facts and productions of which it is essential to mark the characteristics and seek the causes, and nothing more. . . . Science neither pardons nor proscribes; it verifies and explains. It does not say to you, despise Dutch art because it is vulgar, and prize only Italian art. . . . Science has sympathies for all the forms of art, and for all schools, even for those most opposed to each other. . . . It accepts them as so many manifestations of the human mind. . . . It is analogous to botany, which studies the orange, the laurel, the pine, and the birch with equal interest; it is itself a species of botany, applied not to plants, but to the works of man. By virtue of this it keeps pace with the general movement of the day, which now affiliates the moral sciences with the natural sciences."

[2] Lalande, *Vocabulaire,* p. 291. E. Hennequin, *La Critique scientifique* (Paris, 1888). E. Galabert, *Les fondements de l'esthétique scientifique* (Paris, 1898); *Revue Internationale de Sociologie* (1898), pp. 1–15.

[3] *Discours liminaires* by Paul Valéry and Victor Basch, in *Deuxième Congrès International d'Esthétique et de Science de l'Art* (Paris, 1937), pp. XII, LI. Basch was appointed in 1918 as the first professor of aesthetics and science of art at the Sorbonne.

scientific aesthetics in 1908, with a review of previous German, French, and English work, and then proceeded into many fields —especially music and literature—with his penetrating psychological and sociological analyses.[4] Etienne Souriau in 1929 outlined a future course for scientific aesthetics.[5] Monod-Herzen, Lehel, and Lucien Rudrauf attempted the morphology or structural analysis of artistic forms.[6] Bouglé's *Evolution of Values* placed the subject of aesthetic value in a context of naturalistic sociology. France has had many first-rate cultural historians and analysts of style, such as Mâle in the medieval, and Grousset in the oriental field. Henri Focillon, in his essay on *The Life of Forms in Art* and in his lectures at Yale and other universities, made a notable contribution to the "general science of art" in America. He disliked "aesthetics," in the old sense, but nevertheless was a leader in scientific aesthetics from his vantage point as an art historian.

In England, Grant Allen's *Physiological Aesthetics* (1877) was a landmark in the scientific approach. Banister Fletcher's monumental *History of Architecture on the Comparative Method* first appeared in 1896. It gives a comparative analysis of the Gothic, Classic, and Renaissance styles in regard to general plans, walls, openings, roofs, columns, mouldings, and ornament, with many concrete examples and a discussion of geographical, geological, climatic, religious, social, and historical influences on style. Works of this type qualify as *Kunstwissenschaft* and as aesthetics in the broad present sense, whether or not their authors so labelled them. But in the English-speaking world of recent years, theoretical studies within a single art have not been linked up systematically with those in other arts, or with philosophic aesthetics. This is true of many important British studies in special fields related to aesthetics, such as those of Frazer in cultural anthropology and folklore, of Havelock Ellis on the dance and on the psychology and literature of sex, of R. G. Moulton[7] and I. A. Richards on literary forms, of Donald Tovey on

[4] *L'esthétique expérimentale contemporaine* (1908); *Les sentiments esthétiques* (1910); *L'art et la vie sociale* (1921); *Eléments d'une esthétique musicale scientifique* (1939); *L'esthétique du rire* (1949), and others.

[5] *L'avenir de l'esthétique: essai sur l'objet d'une science naissante.*

[6] E. Monod-Herzen, *Principes de Morphologie générale* (1927); E. Marguery, *L'oeuvre d'art* (1929); F. Lehel, *Morphologie comparée des arts* (1930); L. Rudrauf, *L'Annonciation* (1943).

[7] *The Ancient Classical Drama* (Oxford, 1890); *The Modern Study of Literature* (Chicago, 1915), etc.

music analysis, of Roger Fry and Herbert Read on visual art. The ingredients for scientific aesthetics are present, but more thorough synthesis is needed.

The time is overdue for bringing these ingredients together, first of all through a large-scale program of bibliographies, translations, critical summaries, and publications in different languages; second, through more thoroughly integrated, original syntheses. For this purpose, a clear conception of the new and broad extent of aesthetics is essential. Much of the writing now accepted by aestheticians as important for their subject is not so labeled. An author with the old conception of "aesthetics" in mind may even deny that he is writing about it, or has any interest in it. Many such reluctant collaborators are being claimed by aesthetics, willy-nilly. This makes it hard to survey current trends in the subject. It would be easy to limit one's account to the few recent publications, most of them highly specialized, which are explicitly classed as aesthetics. But that would give a very inadequate picture of what is happening on a larger scale.

In saying that aesthetics is expanding to include "general science of art," we do not, then, refer only to the work of German aestheticians, psychologists, and art historians. To Dessoir belongs the chief credit for publicizing the need of co-operation between philosophical aesthetics and empirical studies of the arts. He advanced the subject more by promoting co-operation among different groups of scholars, and by combining their contributions, than by any particular new discovery or theory of his own. The German-writing school of cultural historians, from Burckhardt through Fiedler, Riegl, Wölfflin, Dilthey, Cassirer, Hermann Schneider, Spengler (in spite of his many errors), Leichtentritt, Sachs, Panofsky, and others, have made great indirect contributions to aesthetics through showing the role of the arts in the history of civilization. Important supplementary work is coming from other countries and other subjects: especially psychology, anthropology, and the cultural history of the orient. Thus we have seen, flowing into contemporary aesthetics, many different streams of thought and inquiry. It will be the task of aesthetics in the second half-century to co-ordinate them in a systematic investigation of the arts and related modes of behavior and experience.

III

KNOWLEDGE AND CONTROL IN THE FIELD OF AESTHETICS*

The subject of aesthetics is commonly regarded as one with little or no practical use or influence. In America, this is likely to be taken as a fault—as equivalent to saying that it has little value or claim to serious attention. In Europe, it is often considered as a virtue and a cause for pride. In the present age, when almost everything, including science, is being appraised more and more for its utilitarian value, is it not well to keep some branches of philosophy apart, as havens of refuge for pure, disinterested reasoning? Should not aesthetics be studied, as always hitherto, for the sake of truth and beauty alone and without thought of possible utility?

The American attitude does tend to evaluate all subjects—even philosophical ones—partly in terms of their practical applications. But "practical," in the broad sense used by Dewey and other American philosophers, does not necessarily imply a narrow, material kind of utility, as in weapons, plows, or automobiles. Any branch of knowledge or theory has practical value if it can be used to advantage in some phase of life, thought, action, or experience. It is practical in this sense to use an ethical principle as a guide in conduct, or to use an aesthetic principle as a guide in producing, appreciating, or criticizing art. Aesthetics becomes practical, even aside from art, if it can help someone to understand and enjoy the beauty of nature and the relation of aesthetic enjoyment to other values of life. Any type of aesthetic theorizing which has no relevance to action whatever, which cannot affect conscious living or be tested out in concrete experience, will probably have little significance or value as pure knowledge.

Is the subject of aesthetics, as a whole, completely impractical in this sense? Certainly no one can claim for it important immediate results in overt action comparable to those of military strategy, chemistry, or statecraft. Nor can one easily prove that aesthetic

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theory has had much effect on action even in the field of art. Trends in aesthetic theory have on the whole followed, not preceded, major trends in art, justifying or condemning the latter after the fact, and often ignored by later artists. But this inefficacy is not necessarily permanent, and may perhaps be corrected by a different approach to aesthetics itself.

Obviously, we have not yet achieved scientific understanding and control of art, or of human nature by the means of art, in any degree approaching that to which we have achieved control in other fields of phenomena. Through chemistry and physics we do, in substantial degree, control the physical world, for good and for ill; through medicine, hygiene, animal husbandry, and horticulture we control, to a lesser extent, the world of animal and plant life. Through the social sciences we have achieved some understanding of human institutions and group behavior, but considerably less control. Through psychology and its educational and therapeutic applications we are beginning the scientific conquest of mental phenomena.

The relations of art and of aesthetics to these other fields are manifold. A work of art is in some respects a physical and chemical phenomenon; in some respects a social and economic one; in other respects, psychological. Knowledge about its nature, origins, and functioning can be derived through the methods and viewpoints of all these sciences, and all can show us how to use and control it in certain ways. But none is especially interested in works of art as such, or devotes a major part of its effort to describing and experimenting with them. They enter the social and psychological sciences as one among many types of phenomena, and are studied there in rather limited, specialized ways. Aesthetics is traditionally the subject which concerns itself with works of art and their attributes, directly and explicitly. But so far it has failed not only to achieve scientific understanding and control in the realm of art, but even to accept that aim as one to be consciously and systematically worked for. Even the words "control of art," or "control by means of art," have a strange, fantastic sound, as if one were proposing something impossible, and perhaps undesirable.

Yet such control is, to some extent, being actively practiced today, and has been practiced for several millennia. As all students of history know, art has been one of the most powerful instruments of control by organized religion, by governments, and dominant social groups. As a means of propaganda, it is a potent weapon of totali-

tarian states today in such forms as oratory, pageantry, music, idealized portraits, and repulsive caricatures. In the service of modern capitalism, it has achieved complex and costly developments in the form of advertising and other commercial arts. Educators make increasing use of art, such as textbook illustrations, models, motion pictures, and theater projects, as means of directing the mental development of students. Doctors use art to correct mental maladjustments and relieve nervous distress. To some extent, nearly everyone uses art and thus achieves some sort of control with it; not necessarily for any ulterior end, but perhaps for the immediate enjoyment, escape, or enriched experience it can bring. That is, he uses it to control his own immediate moods and trains of thought.

In the hands of clever manipulators, such as are found among advertising and propaganda agencies and among radio, book, and cinema producers, the control of art reaches high levels of efficiency, though usually along restricted lines. These persons can often predict with fair statistical success what effects a certain type of art will have on masses of people, as manifested in their willingness to buy, listen, vote, obey, or fight. But such control is not only selfish and antisocial in many cases, it is also, on the whole, unscientific, empirical, rule-of-thumb. It often fails for no apparent reason, and contains a large element of guesswork. People can use art and achieve some control by it, as they used heat to cook and fermentation to make wine long before scientific physics and biochemistry understood the basic principles requisite for their accurate, extensive control.

In every realm of phenomena, human thought passes gradually from folklore to science; from guesswork, wishful thinking, dogmatism, and vague speculation to verified knowledge; and as a result, to more effective control, including collective use and management for the common welfare. In several realms (the older, more exact sciences) it has achieved the passage to a comparatively high degree, although by no means completely. In aesthetics and ethics, it has scarcely begun, but is in a state of slow transition as new scientific resources become available for approaching ancient problems—for approaching afresh the phenomena of art and human conduct. (In the process, the ancient problems sometimes turn out to have been based on misconceptions and false assumptions, and to require a thorough restatement.)

Modern science had gone a considerable way before Francis Bacon

gave conscious, explicit utterance to certain of its aims and methods. As more clear-sighted progress in the older sciences followed Bacon's heralding, so now it might occur in the study of art if Bacon's own approach were consistently applied there. The understanding and control of art are advancing apace without waiting for aesthetic theorists to give the word. They are advancing not only through scattered scientific researches and experiments, but through extremely practical and sometimes mercenary—even deceptive and destructive—uses, as in the management of advertising, propaganda, and other arts for popular consumption. Applied aesthetics does not wait for pure aesthetics to solve its abstract problems, but proceeds to experiment with rule-of-thumb hypotheses derived from practical experience, and usually not regarded as pertaining to aesthetic theory. Pure aesthetics, on the other hand, might learn much by observing the results of such practical experience in the control of art.

Aesthetics is still commonly regarded in the traditional way as "the branch of philosophy dealing with beauty." This definition of its goal and subject matter directs the aesthetician's quest not toward a set of actual phenomena to be understood—and, if possible, controlled—but toward a conceptual will-o'-the-wisp, an abstraction whose meaning is endlessly debatable and ambiguous, so that he never can be sure that he has found his quarry or is looking at it. Hence he may cover countless pages with fruitless debate over the proper definition of beauty.

Modern aesthetics includes the study not only of works of art, but also of those types of human activity and experience most closely related to art. It is the study of art as an activity, and also of the contemplation, use, and enjoyment of works of art. Since there is still much obscurity surrounding the nature of those complex, variable processes we vaguely call "creation" and "appreciation," and since they are hard or impossible to observe in a behavioristic way, current accounts of them in aesthetic theory are likely to be a compound of speculation, introspection, and scraps of laboratory research.

Limited as our knowledge and control of them are at present, they provide another field of phenomena for aesthetics to examine. From a psychological point of view, even "taste" can be objectively considered if we give that word a different meaning from the one

most common. Taste need not be defined as "good taste"; as ability to discern and appreciate value in art; but in a more factual sense, as a tendency to like certain things and dislike others; as a set of actual habits and standards of preference, whether right or wrong. In that sense, everyone has taste, and the problem of its genesis, varieties, and modes of operation becomes an objective psychological problem. In aesthetics or aesthetic psychology, we study it with special reference to works of art and certain closely related types of object, such as scenes in nature.

But "taste" in any sense is not the whole problem of aesthetic psychology. It has long been overemphasized in general theory and in experimental research. When paramount stress is laid on the question of what people like or should like in art, what they consider beautiful or ugly and for what reasons, the whole subject is likely to appear rather trivial to the outside world. Such an emphasis often springs from a narrowly individualistic hedonism in regard to art in general, and a consequent ignoring of the many important functions—intellectual, moral, practical, and other—which art exerts in society, in addition to pleasing the senses and emotions of the individual.

Again, the task of control in this field is one that society has to undertake with or without the aid of aesthetics. It does so, for example, in art education; in training the prospective artist, in teaching "art appreciation," or in teaching simple artistic techniques as a part of general education. It undertakes, by implication at least, to develop the abilities of the student in dealing with works of art: his powers of creation, of appreciation, or both. Yet what are these powers, and how do they function in the actual processes of creation and appreciation? How do individuals differ, and how does a given individual develop from childhood to maturity as an artist or a connoisseur? To what extent can powers of imagination, perception, or original conception and expression be taught, and what are the best ways of doing so? To what extent is technical discipline in traditional forms, or free expression, the more effective means to these ends? Teachers of the arts must assume some hypothetical answers to such questions and act upon them, either blindly or with full recognition of the underlying problems. But as yet, aesthetic psychology gives them little scientific help in devising effective means to ends. Hence our educational control of art abilities is still slight

and uncertain. We do not even know how much effect any system of formal education can have, in interaction with the potent forces of heredity, home environment, and enveloping socio-economic trends.

As aesthetic discussion keeps taking in more data and theory from cultural history, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and other sources, traditionalists occasionally ask, "But is all this really the proper field of aesthetics? Is it not the task of psychology to study the processes of creative and aesthetic experience? Is it not for the social sciences to study the social origins and functions of art? Is it not for art history and criticism to analyze in detail the countless different types of form in art?" These questions reveal a misconception of the nature of science, as if its "fields" were like the sharply bounded plots of land claimed by private owners under capitalism, and by sovereign states under nationalism. On the contrary, the fields of all sciences overlap indistinguishably. No science owns any one to the exclusion of other workers who may wish to deal with it. The various sciences are merely somewhat different points of view, or phases in a vast, co-operative endeavor. The boundaries between their fields of phenomena are flexible and arbitrary, based on temporary expediency rather than on deep-lying divisions in the universe itself. The more significant question to ask in regard to any particular phenomenon or problem is not "to whom does it rightfully belong?" but "in what various ways can it be effectively studied, with a view to social understanding and control?"

Modern aesthetics can undertake not only a synthesis and reinterpretation of recent discoveries, but also a systematic sponsorship of new inquiries based upon them. As a result, we may look forward to an increase in the extent and reliability of generalizations and predictions concerning (a) the psychological and cultural configurations, individual and social, which tend to produce various types of art; and (b) the tendency of certain types of art to produce certain effects upon certain types of person under certain conditions, both in direct experience of the type usually termed "aesthetic," and also in other types of experience and behavior. Such generalizations are a prerequisite for scientific control in the field of aesthetics.

At any suggestion of a systematic attempt to control art, or to control human thought, feeling, and action by means of art, the cry is sure to arise, "But this means regimentation, propaganda,

tyranny! Art should be free, spontaneous, a haven of refuge from the modern curse of scientific control. To turn it into another branch of technology would be not only impossible but disastrous to art and civilization."

There is much to be said for this objection. Art can certainly be used for evil purposes; for the degradation and enslavement of man, as in aggressive military propaganda and dictatorship. It can be used for selfish, trivial, or fraudulent ends, as in some commercial advertising. The potential strength of art as an instrument for good or evil, through influencing men's minds and attitudes, is unlimited and as yet hardly realized. The present century has shown us clearly that all scientific knowledge—physical, biological, psychological, and sociological—can be put to evil uses in the hands of evil men and governments, or to good uses in the hands of men of good will. Art is no exception. If, through study and experiment, we come to understand more deeply how art operates and how it can be used to influence human experience, behavior, and character, we shall have immensely greater power to use it for either good or evil, happiness or misery, progress or destruction. There is danger as well as promise of good in every increase of human knowledge. The only safety lies in seeing that all these powers are exercised by men of intelligence and good will for the common welfare; that they are put and kept in the hands of expert public servants, chosen and directed by peace-loving, democratic peoples for the benefit of humanity. Whether adequate social controls for that purpose can be set up in time, to direct all scientific technology for constructive ends, remains to be seen.

It is a mistake to suppose, however, that the arts can be forever isolated from the all-encompassing march of science; from the insistence of the scientific spirit on examining every accessible realm of experience and the universe. The complacent dogma that art and aesthetic experience are inaccessible to scientific study is no longer to be taken seriously. Too much of this realm has already been explored, and more lies open to our view whenever we take the trouble to explore it. Nor can the technological enterprise of Western civilization, its most distinctive trait since Leonardo and Bacon, be restrained from active use of all knowledge which can be so applied. Art, as we have just observed, has actually been used since prehistoric times to control or influence human thought and behavior for

better or worse: by church and state, by public education, and by private agencies. Even the individual artist, when he sends forth his story, song, or picture into the world, is influencing human experience and personality for good or ill, whether he intends to do so or not. Control of art and by means of art is still at the primitive, hit-or-miss, trial-and-error stage which precedes scientific understanding. To decide that such control shall be done with knowledge and effectiveness for beneficial ends, as in other branches of technology, would not change present practice in any revolutionary way. But it would involve a radical change of orientation in theoretical aesthetics, where art is still supposed by traditional minds to exist in the clouds. To use art for practical purposes, in the broad sense of "practical," is not necessarily to degrade it for unworthy or menial ends. The main goal chosen for art can be to help produce the best possible kinds of experience, personality, and social order. To do so, it is necessary to learn more about the facts of art and their relation to the facts of human nature. Then, under intelligent direction toward the best ideals of which society is capable, the effectiveness of art as a means to those ends can be immeasurably strengthened.

The idea of controlling or influencing the human mind through exposure to suitable works of art, especially in the education of the young, was strongly urged and emphasized by Plato in the *Republic* and *Laws* and by Aristotle in the *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*. Both of these philosophers made it plain that such control was to be exercised in the interest of ideal ends, not for selfish power or to reduce the public mind to docile obedience. It was to be a means to social harmony and justice, and to develop individual personalities to the highest level of rational activity and happiness of which they were capable. How, then, has it come about that modern liberals now view the idea of control through art with such suspicion? Partly because the conservative aristocratic ideals which Plato sought are no longer fully acceptable in a naturalistic, democratic age, and because his proposed censorship of art seems much too negative and drastic. Also because, during the Christian era, the moral ends which art was made to serve became still more ascetic and otherworldly. Hence the idea of control through art is associated with control for those particular ends, rather than for the more naturalistic ends of aesthetic enjoyment, freedom of thought, and a balanced, healthy personality.

The revolt of nineteenth-century romanticism from the tradition of "art for moral ends" expressed itself rather confusedly in the slogan "art for art's sake," which suggests the untenable view that a work of art is an end in itself rather than a means to some kind of good experience. It went at times to unnecessary, foolish extremes in opposing all kinds of moral responsibility and rational purpose in art. Politically, the idea of using art to influence people's minds had again been associated with a particular kind of such use or misuse—that by hereditary privilege and military power as a means of perpetuating itself. In recent times, it has again been the more tyrannical, oppressive kinds of social ideology, both fascist and communist, which have made most active, systematic, and even scientific use of art, often as a means to selfish power through indoctrination and propaganda. This again has tended to associate, in the minds of liberals, the thought of artistic control in general with that of control for repressive, harmful ends.

As a result modern liberals, through their unreasoning fear of all active, social use of art, are depriving themselves of one of the most powerful weapons in the world struggle for men's minds. In other realms of social control the extremely passive, laissez-faire type of romantic individualism has had to be gradually abandoned in favor of a more realistic liberalism which is not afraid to use science and power, when necessary, to preserve its essential values. Today, it should not be too difficult for a practical liberalism to detach the general concept of control through art from that of the various harmful or obsolete ends for which that control has in the past been exercised. Such control in general is infinitely adaptable for good as well as for evil. It is simple intelligence to correct our aesthetic theories in a way which will encourage constructive thought on desirable ends and means in the active use of art under modern conditions.

IV

FORM IN THE ARTS: AN OUTLINE OF AESTHETIC MORPHOLOGY*

1. The problem of objective description and classification in studies of art

Through studying art from a psychological and sociological standpoint, one may hope to learn more about its genesis, nature, and functions—what factors in the individual artist and in social conditions tend to produce various types of art; how various types of art affect various types of appreciator; what other uses they have in society; and how they can be further controlled for human welfare. To do this, it is necessary to observe and describe particular works of art in a fairly objective way, and to distinguish various types of art, in order to study in detail their interactions with other psychological and social factors.

The attempt to analyze, describe, and classify works of art in a scientific way may be called "aesthetic morphology" and itself be classified as one branch of aesthetics. It is not directly concerned with the nature of beauty or the evaluation of art, or with the psychology of creation or appreciation.

The chief difficulty in describing works of art is to find ways of doing so without, at the same time, expressing debatable personal views about them. It is not objective to "describe" a work of art as beautiful or ugly, pleasant or unpleasant, well or badly drawn. On the other hand, it is not enough to describe art in terms of its size and physical structure, for these fail to bring out the differences in form, style, and expression which are important in determining its psychological and social functions. No way of describing art or anything else can be purely objective, for human responses of perception and thinking are involved. But one can try to leave out the

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more emotional and evaluative terms for the time being, and to emphasize those characteristics which are capable of dispassionate observation by other investigators.

2. Modes of transmission. Presented and suggested factors in aesthetic form

What is *form* in art? In Webster's definition, form is "Orderly arrangement or method of arrangement; as: order or method of presenting ideas; manner of co-ordinating the elements of an artistic production or course of reasoning." In brief, the form of a work of art is the way in which its details are organized.[1] Aesthetic form occurs not only in art but in all types of object, natural or artificial. A flower and a machine have aesthetic form; so does a city or a sunset. It is not the same as physical form (molecular and atomic structure), but consists rather in the structure which a scene or other object appears to have, as an object of aesthetic apperception. The physical form of a painting consists of certain arrangements of atoms and molecules; but this is less important in psychology than the way it functions as a stimulus to perception and understanding.

In terms of the psychology of perception, a work of art consists of certain stimuli to sensory experience, and also to association and interpretation on the basis of memory and past experience. A painting stimulates visual experiences such as those of linear shape, color, lightness, and darkness. It *presents* visual images directly to the eyes. In addition, it has the power to *suggest* other images and concepts to a brain that has been conditioned through experience and education. Thus a painting can be analyzed into certain presented factors (the shapes and colors which are directly visible) and certain suggested factors (the other objects and events such as trees, persons, battles, which it tends to call up in imagination; and also, in some cases, more abstract conceptions such as moral ideals and religious doctrines). Presentation and suggestion are the two *modes of transmission* by which a work of art is conveyed to the apperceptive mechanism of an observer.

[1] The word "form" is also used in a sense equivalent to "shape" or "solid shape," as in speaking of the elements of visual art as "line, form, and color." This is a misleading sense, which makes it hard to compare the arts. The definition adopted here is applicable to all arts, as in speaking of musical or literary form.

No two persons will see exactly the same things in a picture, for each is led by his nature and habits to select slightly different aspects for special notice. No two will imagine or understand exactly the same things, because of differences in mental constitution, habits, and education. But presented factors are comparatively easy to verify and agree upon. One can point out that certain lines are straight or curved; certain areas light or dark, blue or yellow; and all persons of normal vision will agree substantially upon their presence. In describing the presented factor in a work of art, one emphasizes the main, determinate sensory characteristics, not accidental variations such as those caused by unusual lighting, acoustics, or deterioration—unless such characteristics are part of the total effect determined by the artist.

As to suggested factors, there is often more disagreement on exactly what is meant or represented. Various modes of suggestion are employed. One is imitation or *mimesis,* as in a picture of a tree, or in music which resembles the sound of a waterfall or spinning wheel. One is arbitrary *symbolism,* as in the use of a cross to suggest Christianity. In addition, certain visual qualities often derive suggestive power from *common association* or frequent contiguity in experience. Thus reds and yellows may suggest warmth, blues and greens, coolness; horizontal lines rest or stability, and diagonal, wavy, or zigzag lines may suggest disbalance, movement, or agitation. A sound like wailing tends to suggest grief. The particular context in which such an image occurs helps to determine its meaning. The same image in different contexts may mean very different things.

Two or more of these modes of suggestion are often combined in the same work of art: for example, mimesis and symbolism in a picture of the Crucifixion. Program music may convey suggestions, partly by mimesis and partly by common association. Thus mimesis of bird songs may suggest the appearance of birds and a forest interior.

Sometimes the associations suggested in one or more of these ways are so vague, conflicting, or fragmentary as to arouse different interpretations. A picture may look somewhat like a tree, but not exactly. A symbol like the swastika may have different meanings. Thus it is often impossible to say objectively just what is the suggestive content of a work of art. However, there is usually a nucleus of comparatively obvious meanings upon which most observers will agree.

Within a particular cultural environment, common usage tends to attach fairly definite meanings to particular images and groups of images. Artists come to use certain images with a definite intention, and observers to understand them in the same way, by tradition and convention. Authoritative reference works, such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, and books on the iconography of art, confirm a number of these symbol-meaning relations. On a basis of social custom, then, it becomes possible to say with some objective authority that a certain picture has certain definite meanings, whether uneducated or disputatious persons understand it so or not.

In addition to these established meanings, the same work of art may have others which are less cogent, more subject to personal interpretation. These can hardly be classed as objective parts of the form. Likewise, affective responses—of liking and disliking, enjoyment and displeasure—which are made to a work of art are not parts of its aesthetic form in a strict sense. They are too individual and variable. But the form of the work of art as a whole, from a standpoint of aesthetic apperception, does include not only the directly presented images but also that portion of its suggestive content which is most definitely demonstrable on a basis of cultural usage. There is no sharp boundary; the established suggestive form shades off into extraneous associations, and it is often doubtful whether a certain alleged meaning should be included as part of the form.

The distinction between presented and suggested factors becomes clear if we compare a picture with a literary form, such as a poem. Here the directly presented factors may be auditory images (the sounds of spoken words) or visual images (printed words on a page). Whichever is used, the form of the poem evidently includes something more than these presented images. It includes also an arrangement of meanings—of other images and concepts which the words suggest. Words, written or spoken, are arbitrary symbols endowed with more or less definite suggestive powers through cultural usage. In the case of printing, the visible shape and color of the letters make little essential difference to the form of the poem; it can even be conveyed tactually through Braille type for the blind. Of course, the sound of the words is important, as in rhyme and rhythm. But that can be either presented (if spoken aloud) or suggested (if read silently). When read silently, as it now is to a great extent, literary form is largely suggestive. The suggestive factor then includes word-

sound patterns as well as arrangements of other images and concepts. Music, on the other hand, is still presented aurally, as a rule, although some experts can understand a printed score without hearing it played. Musical form is thus largely presentative, but it also includes suggested images and emotions, especially in romantic "program" music.

In visual art, the presented factors tend to make up a conspicuous part of the total form, and to be regarded as essential to it. Sometimes, as in abstract decoration, they make up almost the whole form, and there is little definite meaning. (There is always some, for all sense data call up some associations, individual and cultural.) At other times, as in story illustration, the suggestive content may bulk larger in the whole. In the case of useful art, such as a cup or sword, part of the suggestive content consists of associations derived from use. To tell what the object means, one must then tell how it was used or for what functions it was adapted.

On the basis of their usual modes of presentation, it is possible to distinguish works of art, and arts in general, as being presentatively specialized or diversified (mixed or combined arts). Painting and sculpture are visual arts in that they specialize in visual presentation, even though a statue can be experienced tactually, and even though both may convey nonvisual suggestions. Music is an auditory art, and literature is primarily so even though it can be experienced visually. An opera is diversified in addressing both eyes and ears. An illustrated book is mainly visual (aside from its tactile qualities); but it is diversified as to mode of suggestion—partly mimetic (in the pictures) and partly symbolic (in the printed words).

When two or more arts or media are thus combined, the form produced in one usually acts as framework, and the others fit in as accessories. Thus, in a stage play, the literary text is usually taken as the basic framework, and a number of accessory arts (stage design, costume, lighting, incidental music, etc.) may fit into it.

Some arts or types of aesthetic form are addressed principally to one of the lower senses, such as perfume and cookery. The forms which they present are usually simpler, though not necessarily less pleasant or valuable, than those addressed to the so-called higher senses. Lower-sense stimuli may fit into a complex, higher-sense form: e.g., incense (olfactory) into a religious ritual (visual and auditory).

3. The components of aesthetic form

We have not described the form of a work of art by merely dividing it into presented and suggested factors. It is necessary to observe what specific *ingredients* are presented, what ones are suggested, and how they are organized. Psychology helps considerably in describing them, for they are the same as in all conscious experience. The materials of art, from a standpoint of aesthetic apperception, are not chemical pigments, bronze and marble, but visible shapes and colors, joys and sorrows, desires, beliefs, and actions.

To classify the materials of art, we must look to psychology for a classification of the modes of human experience and behavior, and so far there has been no adequate one. The traditional way is under such headings as sensation, emotion, conation (will or volition), reasoning, and so on. This is open to objection, as suggesting the old faculty psychology, but has its uses at the present early stage in the psychology of art. However, any approach to general psychology is also, by implication, an approach to describing the materials of art. For art selects and rearranges details from life experience into new, concrete forms.

Inadequate as they are, the traditional psychological categories are useful in analyzing a work of art. "Sensation" includes vision and other senses. In visual art, by definition, we are concerned only with forms whose main presented ingredients are visual rather than auditory. There are certain concepts by which we compare and describe visual objects: especially shape and color. Under "visual" come linear shape or line, surface shape, and solid shape (sometimes called mass or volume). Under "color" come hue, lightness and darkness (often called "value" in art, and in physics often called "brilliance"), and saturation (often called chroma or intensity). These are the principal visual attributes, but many others can be added. In talking of shape, it is often important to note the shape of voids or empty spaces. In talking of colors, it is often important to notice their luminosity, as in colored electric lights. Effects of texture are produced by many small variations in color, shape, or both. Auditory sense-images are analyzed into pitch, timbre, rhythm, consonance and dissonance, loudness, etc.

These attributes function as elementary *components* in aesthetic

form. They are concepts devised by the human mind for describing objects perceptually, and do not refer to independent realities. They are "elementary" only in a relative sense, by comparison with more complex forms in art; many can be further analyzed. No such attribute ever occurs alone; line is always the linear shape of some colored area or solid. Under the heading of each attribute or component, common usage recognizes a multitude of names for specific *traits* and *types* of quality. Under hue, for example, come red, green, and violet; under lightness or value, the various shades and tints from very dark to very light. Under linear shape come the various geometric types such as straight line, arc, angle, and the free-flowing or biomorphic, irregular, wavy line. Under solid shape come the geometric types such as cubical, spherical, pyramidal; and others more irregular, such as cloud-shaped or mushroom-shaped. Under timbre (an auditory component) come various specific tone qualities, such as violin tone, flute tone, etc. These are elementary auditory traits. Countless words are in use to describe the specific sensory qualities of things. They occur in art as *component traits*. Any work of art may be analyzed as to its visual or auditory ingredients in terms of a peculiar set of such component traits.

The psychological content of a work of visual art is not restricted to visual qualities. "Visual" refers only to its mode of presentation to the observer—to its presented content. A work of visual art may suggest visual images which it does not directly present, as of solid shape and deep space in a painting. In addition, it may suggest a much wider range of sensory images. It can suggest tactile and kinesthetic images, sounds, and even tastes and odors, as in a picture of flowers, food, and wine. Its suggestive content can extend beyond the sensory: to emotions, desires, and rational inferences.

In each case, if one asks what sorts of thing are suggested, the answer will be in terms of general *components* of experience, such as emotion, and of specific traits or types under each.[2] Among the specific emotions which art may suggest are joy, grief, and anger. Desire, aversion, indifference, and many more specific types of attitude come under the general heading of conation or volition. Art

[2] Affective responses (emotions, desires, etc.) which are suggested in and by a form are not the same as affective responses to the form by some observer. One may recognize that a pictured face expresses sadness without being moved to sadness by it.

may suggest abstract concepts, religious beliefs, logical arguments, overt actions—in short, examples of any mode of experience or behavior. Music, though an auditory art in presentation, can suggest visual images and other types of experience.

Any work of art can be described as to its suggested as well as its presented ingredients in terms of a peculiar set of specific types of emotion, conation, and so on. Some works of art are more diversified than others in terms of the different kinds of experience which they present or suggest. Rembrandt's works are usually restricted in range of presented hues and saturations, but highly varied in light and dark. Dante's *Divine Comedy* suggests a wide range of human emotions and desires; a Shakespeare sonnet is more limited in range. A Cézanne still life is more specialized in suggestive content than Tintoretto's "Paradise" or Michelangelo's "Last Judgment." A Persian rug is often more diversified in its presented shapes and colors than in its suggested meanings.

Strictly speaking, the ingredients of a work of art are not really "in" the object (e.g., a painting) as a physical thing, but largely in the behavior of humans toward it. People respond to a given type of art in a more or less similar way, because of similarities in their innate equipment and cultural conditioning, and tend to project these responses upon the object which arouses them, as if they were attributes of the object itself. Metaphysically, this raises difficult problems of distinguishing the real from the apparent; but they need not all be raised in aesthetics. To aesthetics, the "real" in a metaphysical or physical sense is less important than the way things appear to human experience. And from a psychological standpoint, "appearing" is a fact in itself, a psychological phenomenon to be explained. To explain it fully, one would have to consider not only the nature of the outside object but that of the individual responding—the mental structure which makes it appear to him in a certain way. Here we are interested in the description of aesthetic forms as they appear to human beings in a cultural environment, including not only the sensory but the meaningful aspects of these forms.

4. Spatial, temporal, and causal organization

The organization of aesthetic forms can be described in various ways. In other words, a work of art is usually organized in various ways at the same time. Likewise, an animal organism can be described in terms of its nervous, muscular, circulatory, and other modes of organization.

One way in which a work of art is organized is in certain dimensions of space and time. Various types of art can be contrasted as to their mode of *spatio-temporal* organization. For example, an oil painting is presented to the eyes as essentially a flat, two-dimensional area. (The actual thickness of paint and canvas is usually not emphasized.) But as a suggestive form, it can be three-dimensional; that is, represent a scene in deep space. It presents no moving images; its presentation is not developed in time. Its presented factor is static. But it can suggest movement and temporal sequence, as in the early Italian paintings which show successive stages in the ascent to Calvary. A carved relief, a statue, or a chair is directly presented to the observer as three-dimensional, even though the third dimension is inferred from images on the retina of the eye. It presents different aspects as one views it from different positions. A relief, as in the Ghiberti doors, can also suggest further three-dimensional development, in deep space. Most rug designs are presented in two dimensions, and have little or no suggestive development in a third, although they occasionally suggest a rounded flower or animal. Raised embroidery or cut velvet involves a slight three-dimensional presentation. Tapestry pictures are often highly developed in the suggestion of deep space. A building, a town, a formal garden, and a flower arrangement on a tray are all presented in three dimensions of space, but with different degrees of development. The garden is usually less elaborately developed in its vertical than in its other dimensions. It presents movement when wind and weather move the flowers and trees, but this movement is not definitely determined or regulated by the artist. There is determinate change in the garden when flowers are placed so as to bloom in a definite sequence. An object such as a weather vane or water wheel has mobility of a simple, rudimentary sort. A shadow play or motion picture is presented in two dimensions on a flat screen,

but with a determinate sequence of images in time. Its presented factor has complex, determinate change or motion. It also suggests three-dimensional space and movement, the motion picture much more definitely than the shadow play of silhouettes. A marionette show, a stage play, and a ballet are presented in three dimensions of space and in time, and more or less definitely determined in these four dimensions. In dramatic action, there is usually little development in the vertical dimension, but there may be if action takes place on various levels of the stage, as through ramps, platforms, and balconies. The dancer's movements are developed and presented in all four dimensions.

In music, the presented form is mobile and developed in definite temporal order; but the spatial arrangements of the sounds (where they are to come from) is indeterminate except in rare examples such as antiphonal singing in a church. Literary form is likewise developed mainly in time, the order of words being essential. When presented visually on a page, the two-dimensional space arrangement of letters is important; but it is not directly essential to literary form, since this can be presented aurally with no definite spatial images at all. Literature can develop suggested images of two or three spatial dimensions, as in describing a cathedral interior.

The relative complexity of a work of art depends in part on the degree to which it is definitely developed in these various dimensions. It may be highly complex in two-dimensional presentation and very simple or undeveloped in others, as in the case of a Persian rug design. Complexity, in one or in several dimensions, consists of differentiation and integration among parts. It differs from simple unity, as in a stone pyramid, and from disordered multiplicity, as in the wreckage of a bombed house.

Another way of interrelating the images presented and suggested by a work of art is *causal organization*. This occurs in literature, as in the plot of a narrative which shows the effect of one action or character on another. It also occurs in pictures which represent a dramatic situation, as in Leonardo's "Last Supper," where the effect of Christ's words on the various disciples is shown. It is highly developed in drama and cinema. The observer must interpret and organize the successive details, not only in terms of before and after, but in terms of one causing or influencing the other. Here again, the organization can be vague or definite, simple or complex, realistic or fantastic.

5. Developed components

As art forms become more complex, it often becomes necessary to deal with them in terms of components more complex than line, light, and color. For example, motion picture producers and critics discuss a film in terms of continuity, montage, photography, setting, animation, and so on. Dramatists and novelists speak of plot, dialogue, and characterization. These are *developed components* in form, conceived as more or less complex combinations of several elementary components. In music, the elementary component *pitch* is developed into melody and harmony. That is, melody and harmony consist of the organized interrelation of tones, mainly on a basis of differences in pitch. Melody also involves developed rhythm. In painting, we speak of drawing, modeling, tonality, color harmony, perspective, and so on—all involving complex developments of visual shape and color. There is no brief, final list of the developed components in art. New conceptions of them appear in the course of development of a vital art, as means whereby artists plan and organize their works, and critics analyze them.

In a highly diversified art, where much specialization of process has occurred, such developed components often come to be recognized as distinct arts. Their products can be regarded as more or less complete works of art in themselves capable of being enjoyed independently, in addition to being factors in a still more complex form. This is true of opera, where literature is a *component art,* producing the libretto, and where music, dancing, costuming, lighting, and acting are also component arts. In such cases, one art usually provides the *basic framework,* while the others fit in as *accessories.* In opera, the libretto with its plot and dialogue usually acts as the basic framework, even though the singing may be considered most important.

6. Modes of composition in art

Compositional organization is another way of interrelating the details in a work of art. There are four principal *modes of composition:* utilitarian, representative, expository, and thematic. All the modes of composition are used in all the arts, though to a different

extent at different periods. (This is one basis for distinguishing styles.) A single work of art may involve all four modes; many are organized in two or more modes at the same time.

(a) *Utilitarian* composition consists in arranging details in such a way as to be instrumental (or at least apparently or intentionally instrumental) to some active use or end. "Active" refers here to overt bodily action and movement or direct preparation for it, and in general to all the ordinary business of life as distinguished from aesthetic and intellectual contemplation, dreams, and reveries. Utility is fitness for some use over and above being looked at, listened to, understood, or thought about. Utilitarian form is sometimes called "functional." But from a psychological standpoint, art has a function if it serves only as a stimulus to aesthetic perception and enjoyment. Here we are thinking of additional functions in the world of practical behavior.

In so far as a thing is organized in a utilitarian way, its form can be described in terms of fitness for some practical use—of means to an end. We can say this of the blade and handle of a sword; of the legs and seat of a chair; of the walls, roof, and openings of a house; and of each moving part in a machine. (This is not enough to describe the thing in full; for it often involves decorative arrangements also, which may or may not coincide with the utilitarian.)

Literature can be utilitarian, as in advertising, propaganda, guidebooks, or exhortations aimed at influencing or directing action; explaining how to do something or why one should do something. Music is also utilitarian at times, as in bugle calls, marches, and work songs adapted for directing or co-ordinating action.

Even if the form is ineffective for the end sought, it can still be called utilitarian. Sometimes people seek to gain their ends by supernatural means—by magic or by pleasing the gods; at other times by natural means. Each gives rise to its own type of utilitarian forms, such as magic rattles, charms, and rituals on the one hand, and on the other tools, garments, houses, weapons, furniture, and vehicles. Naturalistic technology is often mixed with supernaturalistic, especially at the prescientific stage.

(b) *Representative* composition is arrangement of details in such a way as to suggest to the imagination a concrete object, person, scene, or group of them, in space. Some representation goes further, and suggests a series of events in time. It tends to arouse a specific

concrete fantasy in the mind of a suitably trained and compliant observer.

There are two main types of representation: mimetic and symbolic. In *mimetic* or imitative representation, the presented set of images (lines, colors, etc.) resembles to some extent the set of images which it calls up in imagination. It may be comparatively realistic, or much altered, simplified, or "stylized," so that its meaning is vague or general. Music can thus represent, by a series of mimetic sounds, a battle or a chariot race. In the *symbolic* type, especially literature, the presented images are words or other conventional signs, and usually do not resemble the images which they suggest. Literary representation includes description and narration; the latter represents a series of events in time. Description may suggest the thoughts and character of a person, as well as his appearance. In visual art, representation is usually mimetic, as in a painted landscape or portrait.

Some varieties are *static;* that is, motionless or presenting no determinate order of movements. These include most pictorial and sculptural representation; also the *tableau vivant* in pantomime, and other less common types. Oriental flower and garden art sometimes involves representation, as of a small tray arrangement to suggest a landscape, or a garden mound to suggest Fujiyama. Other varieties are *mobile,* presenting images in a determined order. Mobile pictorial representation includes the cinema in its story-telling phases, whether in photographs or animated drawings; also the Chinese shadow play. The suggested order of events, in which they are supposed to have occurred, may be very different from that in which they are narrated or enacted. Mobile sculptural representation includes marionettes and puppets. Dramatic representation is developed visually through gesture, dance, costume, and scenery; verbally through the spoken text.

(c) Some composition is *expository,* in that it arranges details so as to set forth general relationships, as of causal or logical connection; abstract meanings, pervasive qualities, common or underlying principles. This mode of composition is more highly developed today in literature than in visual art; but it has visual examples also. Much religious art, such as the Dancing Siva in Hindu sculpture, undertakes to convey theological, metaphysical, and moral ideas through visual images. Sometimes their meaning is cryptic and obscure;

sometimes explicit. A great deal of medieval and Renaissance painting expresses Christian belief through symbolism. A single symbolic image is not enough to constitute exposition; the later implies systematic development, involving a number of related meanings. Hieroglyphics and other types of pictography are used not only to suggest concrete descriptions and narrations, but to express abstract principles and arguments. A coat of arms involves expository composition in that it undertakes to convey general facts about the owner's rank and privileges in feudal society, and perhaps about his ideals and the accomplishments of his family. The essay and the treatise are literary types emphasizing exposition; many others, such as the novel and the meditative lyric, often contain expository passages. Music sometimes tries to set forth abstract ideas (religious, moral, etc.), but does not do so very explicitly without the aid of words.

(d) *Thematic* or decorative composition is a kind of aesthetic form which is aimed at, or apparently suitable for, stimulating direct perceptual experience in the beholder, especially through the nature and arrangement of visual or auditory qualities. It differs from utilitarian in that it does not need to be suited for any use in the world of action, or for any use except to provide an object for sense perception. The decorative aspects of an object may or may not have utilitarian functions also. As contrasted with representative form, the thematic does not need to look like anything else, or suggest anything else to the imagination. It may do so, as in a decorative picture, but that is not essential. As contrasted with expository form, the thematic does not need to mean anything in particular—to convey any information, to express any attitudes or concepts, or suggest any relationships over and above those directly observable in the sensory details themselves. A decorative object may happen to do so, as in a coat of arms; but that is not essential to its nature as decoration.

When developed with some complexity, a thematic or decorative composition is called a *design*. Design is usually only one factor in the total form of a work of art. It can be described in terms of thematic [3] relations: the repetition and variation of certain component traits such as blue areas and curving lines; and perhaps their contrast with markedly different traits such as red areas and angular

[3] Thematic repetition is sometimes called "rhythm," but that word tends to confuse it with rhythm in a narrower sense, as an auditory component.

lines. In architecture, designs are built from solid masses and interior spaces, as well as from lines, surfaces, and textures. Design also involves the integration of such thematic relations by subordinating details to a comprehensive pattern or a climax.

Design and thematic relations occur in music and literature (especially poetry) as well as in visual art, but the term "decorative" is not usually applied there. In music, designs are built by repeating, varying, contrasting, and integrating themes through the use of melody, harmony, rhythm, instrumental timbre, and other components. Literary design consists partly in word-sound patterns (involving such components as rhythm, rhyme, and assonance); partly in thematic organization of meanings—i.e., the systematic repetition, variation, and contrast of suggested images and concepts. Design can be developed to any degree of complexity desired, by differentiating parts and including small pattern-units within larger ones.

A given set of component traits can be arranged according to any of these modes of composition, or according to two or more at once. Some types of art are compositionally *specialized* in that they involve development in only one mode. These are sometimes called "pure decoration," "purely utilitarian," and so on. But most works of art involve more than one mode. Even if a tool, chair, or house is bare and unadorned, and intended only for utilitarian purposes, it is sure to involve some aspects of a thematic nature. In the chair, for example, the four legs will constitute a series of repeated cylindrical masses which fit together as a thematic arrangement. However, the thematic development of the chair may proceed much further than this, as through the addition of incised grooves and ridges, or the coloring of surfaces. These additions may or may not fit into the utilitarian scheme (i.e., be useful in themselves). They may or may not be integrated with the utilitarian scheme from a decorative standpoint, as through making the added lines repeat the contours of the legs, seat, and back. Furthermore, the chair may be developed along representative lines, as in a king's throne ornamented with carved animals in relief. Finally, these details may have expository significance if they fit together into a coat of arms. A Gothic cathedral is highly developed in all four modes of composition, through its functional basis, its thematic treatment of masses and surfaces, its sculptural and stained glass representations, and its theological and moral symbolism. A Dancing Siva contains sculp-

tural representation of a dancing figure, a design of masses, lines, and surfaces, and a complex religious and philosophic exposition. It also has utility for purposes of worship. Such works of art are highly *diversified* as to modes of composition.

From the standpoint of form analysis, the modes of composition operate as *factors* in a particular work of art. In other words, a work of art can be described as to the various modes of composition which are involved in it: their relative emphasis and degree of development, and their interrelations in that particular object. For example, we speak of the "design element" or the "decorative element" in a painting, of the relation between thematic and representative elements in music.

It becomes important, then, to notice not only how each compositional factor is developed in itself, but also how and how thoroughly they are *integrated.* In a painting, we may ask how the design is related to the representative factor or "subject matter." Sometimes the design is conspicuous and clearly organized, while the represented objects are vague and distorted. Then we may say that representation is partly sacrificed to design. Sometimes there is a highly realistic portrait or landscape with little or no definite design. However, there is always some thematic or decorative element, if only from the simple lines and colors necessary for representation. Sometimes the design seems clearly integrated with the representation, so that neither can be easily distinguished from the other; the representative form provides a basic structure for the design itself. Sometimes, on the contrary, the decorative factor in a picture or a building is superficial and separate. Such distinctions are used as a basis for standards of value in art criticism; but the descriptive study of form is content to note them as facts.

One way of discovering whether compositional factors are integrated is to look at a number of individual details and find out whether each is functioning as an element in more than one mode of composition. Does each decorative detail of a building also have a utilitarian function, and does each visible part of the utilitarian scheme contribute to the design? In a picture, a given spot of red may function as part of a represented flower, and also as part of a design of lines and colors.

Whatever compositional factors are present in a work of art, one of them usually acts as a basic *framework* for the whole, the others

being *accessories*. For example, in the decorated chair utility is the framework mode of composition, determining the basic structure. But it does not follow that the framework mode is necessarily the most important from a historical or evaluative standpoint. The utilitarian structure of the chair may be quite conventional, like a thousand others. Its thematic factor, though accessory, may be the only one elaborately developed, and the only one which is distinctive and original. The representation of a scene gives a basic framework to most pictures; but accessory effects of decorative color may give to a certain picture its most distinctive characteristic. Thematic composition may provide the general framework for an abstract design, whose representative factor is confined to occasional repetitions of a flower or animal motif. Thus many permutations as to the relative status of compositional factors are possible in the various arts. Theoretically, any one may provide the framework, and one or more others enter as accessories. But actually, in certain arts, certain factors are most often used as frameworks: e.g., representation in sculpture and design in music.

The relation between modes of composition has important historical aspects. They concern the evolution of art forms and their relation to science. Important primitive and archaic forms are often undifferentiated as to modes of composition, combining several. As historians have pointed out, there is no such thing as pure decoration, art for art's sake, or fine as opposed to useful art in early society. There is little in oriental or medieval culture. The tendency to differentiate sharply between beauty and use, the aesthetic and the practical, the decorative and the functional or significant, is largely a modern trend. A phase of dissociation along these lines followed the Industrial Revolution. It was manifested in many bleak utilitarian products, and on the other hand in an efflorescence of superficial, nonfunctional decoration. Recent years have seen a conscious effort to reintegrate the two, as in artistically designed industrial products. However, there is always a certain pressure toward specialization for the sake of intensive, undistracted progress along one chosen path.

The intensive, specialized development of utilitarian form has led to applied science or technology; that on expository form to pure science and philosophy. The cultural ancestors of modern machines and technical processes, of modern scientific textbooks, are the un-

differentiated forms of early practical and religious art, including philosophic poetry, myth, and folklore. Representation has a scientific development in exact photographs, maps, models, and diagrams. But other types of representation remain within the accepted province of fine art. Thematic design alone has shown no strong tendency to pass from an artistic to a scientific stage. Visual design reached a high intensive development in Islamic textiles (partly because of a taboo against visual representation) and in certain other periods. Auditory design has been intensively developed in modern classical music.

After periods of specialization on one or another mode, there is usually a reaction toward diversity, as in the effort to combine design with representation in painting and sculpture; with utility in furniture and architecture. Another example of such reaction is seen in the development of pictorial art for educational purposes, as in illustrations for children's textbooks. Like much ancient art, they include not only representation and decoration, but an expository element: the conveying of information and abstract ideas through concrete illustration. Advertising and propagandist art are similar in this respect.

7. *Types and styles of art*

The description of a particular work of art is best accomplished by classifying it in terms of various *types*. In zoology, a newly found animal or fossil is thus described by classifying it under various types in various respects. It belongs to one type as to its bony structure; another as to its skin covering; another as to its mode of locomotion; another as to its mode of respiration; another as to its mode of reproduction, and so on. Thus the whole is described as a peculiar combination of various characteristics. In art, one may describe the Statue of Liberty as the figure of a goddess from the standpoint of representation, and as a lighthouse from that of utility. One should also indicate how it *differs* from usual cases of each type. For example, its colossal size distinguishes it from most statues.

In the paragraphs above, we have noted a number of artistic types. Some works of art are visual and some auditory in respect to the principal mode of presentation. Some are diversified and some specialized in range of presented ingredients; some in range of sug-

gested ingredients. Some are specialized on one mode of composition, some on another; some combine several. Some have complex presentative development in three dimensions of space, some in only two. Some are developed in time as well as in three dimensions of space. These are but a few examples of numerous types available for use as terms of description.

The traditional names for aesthetic types and categories are often confusing because of their evaluative implications. For example, to call an object "beautiful," "ugly," "sublime," or "pretty" not only helps to describe it but in part evaluates it—praises or condemns it. At the same time, there is an objective element in the difference between sublimity and prettiness which can be expressed in terms of observable characteristics without reference to value. Other aesthetic types such as "romantic" and "tragic" have a still larger element of objective meaning, and hence can be applied in describing art with less danger of confusion. Some of the so-called "art principles," or alleged rules and standards of good art, also refer to certain objective types of art, and can be so considered apart from questions of value. Whether or not all art should be "balanced" (and many will deny that it should), at least some works of art possess more balance than others. Some works of art contain more "rhythm" than others do; some have more "dominance and subordination" than others have. If defined as purely descriptive terms, these words are useful in comparative analysis. All of them are highly ambiguous. There is no reason for assuming that any one of the current meanings of a certain term is the correct one; but confusion can be avoided by explicitly selecting one definition and holding to it.

Sometimes objects can be compared in a way approximating *quantitative* estimate, though rarely with numerical exactness. For example, one can say that a certain Persian rug is more complex in its visual design than a certain Chinese bowl; or that a Rubens battle scene contains more represented movement than a Chardin still life. These are obvious and will arouse little dispute; but quantitative estimates are often more difficult. At present, measurement can go but a little way in the description of aesthetic form. But much description in other sciences also lacks quantitative exactness.

The description of historic *styles* of art presents an important and difficult task of aesthetics. A style is a distinctive or characteristic mode of presentation, construction, execution, or expression in art.

Historians attempt to define styles characteristic of certain nations, periods, schools, and persons, as the Greek, medieval, impressionist, or Raphaelesque style. As a rule, the broader the scope thus taken in, the more difficult it is to define the style satisfactorily, for the reason that more varieties of form are encountered. If one defines the style too specifically, one must add that many exceptions to it exist in the historical period included. Even a single artist, such as Raphael, is likely to have painted in several different ways during his life; so distinctions are sometimes made as to the early, middle, and late styles of the artist. It is a perennial problem to define such terms as Gothic, classic, and romantic in brief yet adequate terms.

A historic style is in some ways analogous to a biological species as a complex type which persists through many successive individuals. (Even a personal style like the Raphaelesque can be followed by many artists.) It is to be described or defined not in terms of any single type or characteristic, but as a combination of several, such as the usual shape of doors and windows, height of vaults, thickness of walls, type of ornamentation, and so on. However one specifies in these respects, one is likely to find examples which conform in some ways and deviate in others. Artistic styles are much more variable than biological species. They change more rapidly, and merge imperceptibly into other styles. For this reason, it is well to think of styles as dynamic, complex trends, rather than as fixed and definite.

Concepts of historic styles are useful in describing individual works of art. It saves a great deal of detail if we can classify a building as typically Romanesque, or a piece of music as Gregorian. By further describing, in terms of specific varieties, or a combination of different trends and traits of style, we can quickly give a rough idea of the nature of the work of art and its place in history. However, much depends on the accuracy with which our style-names are defined and applied; often they are vague and inconsistent. Also, one should not overlook the unique characteristics of a work of art which differentiate it from other examples of its style. By classifying an object under more and more types and styles at once, we approach a description of its individual character.

Some of the difficulty arises from confusion in applying the names of styles both to abstract types and to particular historic periods or nations. If one thinks of the Baroque period as equivalent to the

seventeenth century in Europe, then the Baroque will include many different types of art. If one thinks of it as an abstract type involving large, sweeping curves, oblique and eccentric patterns, emotional excitement and so on, then examples of the Baroque style will be found in other centuries, and even in other civilizations such as that of India. It is important for the study of cultural history to recognize such resemblances among the arts of remote peoples and places; but to do so we need clearer definitions of various styles as abstract complex types. Many terms used as names of abstract types are also used in the other sense. For example, "classic" refers to the art of Greece and Rome, and also to a recurrent, abstract type involving comparative regularity, balance, symmetrical proportion, smoothness, gently flowing curves, rationality, and cool serenity of expression. "Romantic" refers to European art in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and also to an abstract type involving a tendency to irregularity, rough textures, sentiment, primitive impulse, and passion.

Of course, the terms "classic" and "romantic" as so defined do not characterize all the art of any one period or nationality, for every age contains divergence. If such terms are to be used as names of abstract types, they should be clearly defined as such apart from special historical associations; but it is hard to exclude the latter. Even when abstractly defined, their application to particular cases is troublesome. Cases will appear which embody some but not all characteristics of the type as so defined. For example, Delacroix, Beethoven, and Keats are romantic in some but not all the traits just mentioned; and their individual works vary considerably. However styles are defined, examples will be found which conform to none exactly; which are intermediate or transitional, embodying characteristics of more than one. Such examples are found in biology also, but plants and animals are more "true to type" than works of art.

Some styles and trends involve several or all the arts of a period, and their analysis provides a useful way of comparing and interrelating different arts. For example, how is the romantic movement manifested in painting, music, and poetry; in the picturesque garden, the novel, and the opera—even in philosophic, political, and economic theory? We must be careful not to assume that all contemporary works (e.g., of the romantic period) share the same style.

Works produced at the same time and place are sometimes at opposite poles as to style. Usually a style trend occurs in certain arts considerably before it does in others.

The causal explanation of the genesis of styles, and of their relation to other cultural factors, is not a problem of form-analysis alone, since it requires much supplementary information. But it cannot be effectively pursued without clear description and classification of the forms of art themselves.

8. Comparative analysis

In spite of the confusing ambiguity of aesthetic terms, they contain enough definite meaning to provide a basis for descriptive study. They are gradually being refined through the aid of the dictionary-makers, and through theoretical analysis in the light of concrete examples. It would be a mistake to wait until they are defined to everyone's satisfaction before going on with research. In fact, endless arguments over the definitions of beauty, sublimity, the classic, and similar terms have too long delayed inductive inquiry.

In learning to analyze art, students usually go through several stages. The first stage, that of an untrained observer, is to notice only a few fragmentary aspects in a work of art. In painting and sculpture, beginners tend to notice an occasional conspicuous detail: a facial expression, gesture, or unusual garment; and to ignore the structure of the whole. Through practice and instruction, they can be led to notice many other types of detail and relation, including those of design, and to identify examples of the chief historic styles. At this second stage, the task of analyzing a single work of art in words is apt to seem endless. There are so many things to be said about it—so many details and relations to be noted in each case—that a single description could run into volumes.

The third stage is reached only by further comparative study in the light of historical knowledge. It is one of abbreviation; of singling out the few most important things to say of each particular case. This will of course vary considerably according to the interest or problem one has in mind. But in general, one acquires speed in observation and in finding the proper word to describe each characteristic observed. One learns to select the distinctive traits in each particular case which set it off from all others. For example, one may

immediately recognize a painting as impressionist, and probably a work by Monet. Having said that it is a typical Monet in most respects, one can take a great many details for granted as covered by this classification. The next step is to notice how it differs from many other Monets, and from the usual impressionist picture. This may be through an exceptional emphasis on definite perspective or linear design. A brief explanation may serve to bring out the principal ways in which this example is distinctive and original in relation to previous accomplishments.

It does not follow that an appreciator should notice only these distinctive traits, but they are important for brief scientific reporting. Even in appreciation, as one encounters more and more works of art, most of them saying only what has been said many times before, one tends to look at each for its distinctive qualities, if any. The training needed here is in perception and understanding, involving sensory and intellectual elements in close co-operation. The emotional and evaluative elements in appreciation are not directly concerned. But the central ability to perceive and understand art often tends to increase enjoyment and discrimination also. In science and in education, it can lead to further investigation of the genesis and functions of art in society, and thus to increased control of art as a means to human welfare.

V

THE MORPHOLOGY OF ART AS A BRANCH OF AESTHETICS*

1. Aesthetic morphology as descriptive study of aesthetic form

The field of aesthetics, as an empirical science, contains two main groups of phenomena. One consists of *works of art:* of pictures, poems, dances, buildings, symphonies, and other types of product, form, or composition. The second consists of related human *activities:* modes of behavior and experience, both overt and internal; skills, responses to stimuli; the processes involved in creating, producing, or performing art and those involved in perceiving, appreciating, using, enjoying, evaluating, managing, teaching, or otherwise dealing with it. The first group of phenomena is the special concern of *aesthetic morphology:* the study of form in works of art. The second is the special concern of *aesthetic psychology,* with the aid of sociology, anthropology, and other humanistic sciences.

The two groups are different ways of looking at much the same phenomena. There are *forms* in all these kinds of phenomena: there are transitory and recurrent configurations in physical objects and events, in overt behavior and inner experience. They are described by various sciences. But we shall restrict the word "morphology" to study of the forms which are observable in works of art. In describing works of art, we must refer constantly to how they affect observers, to the social functions for which they were adapted, and so on. In describing behavior and experience in the aesthetic realm, we must refer constantly to how they focus upon works of art, before and after the production of such works. But there is a difference in emphasis and mode of organization. In aesthetic morphology, we tend to keep our attention on the products; in aesthetic psychology, on the people who make and use them. In one we classify our findings on a basis of types of form or modes of organization in works

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of art; in the other, on types of human activity, and types of individual or group engaging in them. Aesthetic axiology, the study of values and disvalues in art, tends to divide its attention between the two, referred back and forth between the work of art and its diverse effects on human beings.

"Form" in the sense of *mode of arrangement* includes the physical and chemical structure of objects and events, as described in terms of atoms and molecules; also their outward aspects and appearances, as perceived or imagined. A scene in nature has a certain visible form for one observer from a certain viewpoint under certain conditions; another form for a different observer. A painting of the scene has a somewhat different form; a mental image of it still another. A snow crystal presents a highly regular form to view. The ticking of a clock has audible form, and so has the song of a bird. A football game or a battle has form, and a verbal account of it has another kind of form. A theorem of Euclid has form, and so has a poem, a song, or a dance.

It is a task of aesthetic morphology to distinguish these various kinds of form in terms (a) of the elements, details, parts, materials, ideas, or other ingredients involved, and (b) of the ways in which these are interrelated—the brief or enduring structures into which they combine. Materials never exist and cannot be experienced without some kind of form. A rough marble block has one kind of form, a statue another. Forms cannot exist or be experienced apart from some kind of material or ingredient.[1]

Aesthetic morphology pays close attention to both forms and ingredients in art, to their interrelations and mutual influences. But in observation and in theory the emphasis can be placed on one or another at different times, as in showing how spots of a certain color can be arranged in various ways, or how a Romanesque church can be built of brick or marble. Some kinds of material are conceived

[1] The ontological status of such "material" or "content," as related to matter, mind, universals, reality, etc., is a metaphysical problem with which aesthetic morphology, as an empirical science, is not primarily concerned. Such terms as "mental," "physical," and "psychic" can be used in aesthetics as convenient ways of classifying phenomena without specific metaphysical implications as to their ultimate, inherent nature. The word "materials" does not imply physical substance when used in the sense of "ingredients," as in gathering materials for a book.

in physical terms, such as bronze and sound waves; some in psychological terms, such as colors, desires, and emotions. Some kinds of form are described in terms of logical implication, some in terms of spatial, temporal, or causal relationship. All of these and many more basic types of form occur in art, in countless variations which aesthetic morphology tries to analyze, compare, describe, and classify.

Aesthetic morphology describes the nature and varieties of form in the arts and by extension in other objects of human or natural origin, in so far as they are used as stimuli to aesthetic experience. The word "morphology" is less common in aesthetics than in biology, where it refers to the study of plant and animal structure. A work of art is in some respects analogous to a plant or animal; it is a simple or complex arrangement of diversified parts. It may be large or small, static or moving and changing in a peculiar temporal process or cycle. Biological morphology has been defined as "the science of structural organic types," and this phrase can also be applied to art, where many recurrent types of form can be distinguished and classified. In biology, morphology is sometimes understood in a narrow sense as applying only to the externals of form, or to the structure of organs apart from their functioning. It is applied to anatomy as distinct from physiology, the latter of which deals with active functions and processes. We shall not think of aesthetic morphology as so narrowly limited, but as including the active, functional relationship of part to part and part to whole; the operation of the whole form as a stimulus to perception and understanding.

On the other hand, we shall not extend it to cover all the diverse and far-reaching functions which art carries on in society. That study belongs rather to the psychological and sociological phases of aesthetics. Here we shall emphasize those aspects of structure and function which can be directly observed in the work of art itself, with some attention to its psychological and cultural setting but no attempt to analyze the latter in detail.

The functioning of art includes the ways in which it pleases or displeases people, arouses their dislike or admiration, serves to amuse, instruct, or inspire them. Such functions or effects, important as they are, will not be discussed here. Instead, we shall emphasize the ways in which a work of art can serve to stimulate *apperception*—that is, sense perception which involves a comparatively large

amount of interpretation and understanding of meanings. In that way, our analyses of art will be open to verification or correction by other observers.

2. Difficulties in observing and describing works of art

The main difficulty in aesthetic morphology rises from the complexity, subtlety, and variety of forms in art. Had such forms been easy to grasp, they would doubtless have been thoroughly analyzed long ago. But they are often so elusive and intangible as to defy ordinary modes of observation. Plants and animals are made of living tissue which can be cut apart with a knife and viewed in cross section under a microscope. Some art forms are as simple and tangible as an Egyptian pyramid. Some are as complex as a Gothic cathedral; as intangible as a Brahms string quartet; as full of cryptic symbolism as the Apocalypse. What can one say about the structure of art that will apply to things as different as these, each in its own way so hard to analyze? Is there any common substance in them all? Are there any basic modes or principles of organization in forms so unlike? Analogies between works of different arts are often pointed out, but rather vaguely and abstractly: architecture, it has been said, is frozen music. But how can such metaphors be verified, translated into specific resemblances and differences, in such a way that a trained observer can discern them?

It is not easy to find words to describe the many varieties of form in all the arts. A great many of the words applied to art have been used with evaluative implications at one time or another, and may suggest them to some reader now. For example, "Gothic," "Baroque," and "Romantic" have all been used as terms of opprobrium by those who did not like the kinds of art they understood by these names. In using them as descriptive terms, we should clearly indicate what observable characteristics are implied.

Another difficulty arises from past over-specialization in studies of the arts. Musical criticism has one terminology, literary criticism has another, and pictorial criticism a third. Often different terms are used for similar ideas, similar traits of forms in different arts. The same terms—such as "form," "harmony," "color," and "rhythm" —are used with different meanings when applied to different arts. Even within a single art, there is today great disagreement on the

meaning of terms. This is inevitable at the present undeveloped stage in aesthetics. But such ambiguity is a serious obstacle to discussion; hence one should try to define crucial terms clearly and acceptably. In many cases, this will require departing from common usage within one field or another. The vocabulary of comparative aesthetics does not yet possess enough descriptive terms which can be applied in any art. Hence it is necessary to use certain terms which now have only a narrow, specialized usage, and redefine them so as to be more widely serviceable.

3. Aims and values of aesthetic morphology

What good does it do to study the nature and varieties of forms in the arts? To analyze the structure of a particular work of art, and compare it with others? To distinguish styles, and see how a certain style (such as Romantic or Baroque) can manifest itself in many arts? To understand how form in any art can be developed in any way the artist wishes?

It should be repeated that the aim is primarily intellectual and scientific. Its primary aim is not to increase the reader's enjoyment of art or his power as an artist. Yet it is a mistake to assume, as many do, that scientific analysis will decrease enjoyment; that one "kills" a work of art by "dissecting" it. The enjoyment of automobiles, of plants, animals, or human beings is not necessarily decreased by some knowledge of their structure and operation. Enjoyment depends on so many variable factors that no such generalization can be taken for granted. Many students find their interest in art and their enjoyment of it greatly increased by learning to perceive the complex subtleties of form and style, and to recognize major types and tendencies. On the other hand, there are some kinds of person for whom all systematic study of art is distasteful; they prefer to approach it in a more emotional way. Aesthetics, art history, and critical theory are not for them. Artists are often of this type; some profit by intellectual study and excel in it, as Goethe and Leonardo da Vinci did, while others find it dampening to creative imagination. The learning of detached historical facts and theoretical principles is very likely to interfere with aesthetic enjoyment, through interposing a screen of words and concepts between the observer and the work of art. Analysis of form should not do this, if properly con-

ducted. It should be carried on not merely through reading a book of general theory, but by careful observation of works of art which exemplify the principles; by going back and forth between concepts and examples to see the relation between them. If the generalizations are correct, they will aid the student to notice and to understand aspects of art which he might never have noticed by himself, and thus sharpen and enrich his powers of appreciation.

The aim and task of aesthetic morphology is not merely to work out a few abstract definitions of conventional types of art, such as the epic, lyric, fugue, sonata, basilica, and the like. It is not merely to classify particular works of art under such headings. Much time has been wasted in fruitless argument over whether a certain piece of writing was really a novel or a romance, a tragedy or a comedy, and so on. Even when the classification is obvious and undisputed, it still falls far short of penetrating the full, complex nature of a work of art. Such a narrow approach to morphology proceeds from a narrow, inadequate conception of form in art. Form does not consist in the obvious, conventional shell or skeleton in which thousands of examples are alike, as in the mere fact of being a sonnet or sonata. It includes the entire structure of each individual example, its peculiar selection of materials, and its way of arranging them. We have only begun the study of form in recognizing that two poems are both Shakespearean sonnets: the task remains of seeing how they differ in their treatment of this conventional framework; how each is unique, as well as how it resembles other products. Only the most pedantic, mechanical scholarship is content with mere labeling and pigeonholing of works of art.

Greater attention to the individual form—to each particular work of art—distinguishes aesthetic morphology from the morphology of animals, plants, and molecules. In those older sciences, the individual is usually felt as unimportant, and the general type or law as all-important. Little attention is paid to the unique aspects of any single tree, stone, or seagull. True, astronomy is especially interested in our sun, our earth, and our planets, because we live with them; but it tries more and more to see them as details in a cosmic process. Man and the higher animals become attached to individual objects: to children, friends, toys, pets, weapons, houses, sentimental keepsakes, popular heroes and heroines, giving to each an extreme

but relative, subjective importance which differs widely from one person to another. Science tries to correct this personal bias and to emphasize the way in which particular objects conform to general types and tendencies. Yet it can, if necessary, analyze and describe a particular object or event within its field with minute precision. Aesthetics, including the morphology of art, also is interested in general types and tendencies. Artists and art-lovers are sometimes repelled by its emphasis on theory. They dwell with admiration or distaste upon a single work of art as something unique and not to be compared with any other, while aesthetics insists on pointing out how it exemplifies this or that quality, style, or historic trend. At the same time, however, aesthetics studies the peculiarities of individual works of art more than botany studies those of individual trees. This is partly because, in the modern world, such tremendous emphasis is laid on the individual artist and on the unique importance of particular "great" works of art. Aesthetic morphology itself will be considered more important if it produces not only a general understanding of form and style, but improved techniques for perceiving and understanding the distinctive nature of a particular work of art.

For those who appreciate and criticize art, the uniqueness of *Hamlet* and of each of Chopin's *Preludes* is highly important: the subtle ways in which each differs from all others of its kind. Such differences between individual artists and their works provide the basis for all judgments of value and of greatness. One of the crucial problems of cultural history is why humanity produces great distinctive works at one time and place, and at another only stereotyped imitations. Yet what is the difference between *Hamlet* and the common run of Elizabethan tragedies? An indescribable, ineffable *je ne sais quoi?* Mystics and sentimentalists have long been satisfied with this negative answer, that scientific analysis can never reveal the essential difference between one work of art and another; that this difference can only be felt in some mysterious way. Science cannot accept it, at least without a more serious effort than has yet been made. To satisfy the need of human thinking about works of art and artists, it must learn to deal with them as concrete individuals, in addition to dealing with them as examples of types and trends. This does not, necessarily, involve evaluation, though it may. The difference between one work of art and another can be approached as a

problem of descriptive, comparative analysis, as astronomy describes the differences between Mercury and Saturn.

Properly conducted, the study of concrete examples and that of general principles should be mutually helpful and reinforcing. From the standpoint of empirical science, the concepts will be false and artificial unless based on accurate observation.

Conversely, a general understanding of the varieties of form in art, derived from observation and reasoning, will aid in further observation. The fact of having encountered similar kinds of art or qualities in art before, or having singled them out for attention and given them a name and a place in the scheme of things, makes it easier to deal with them in a later situation. One is less bewildered, quicker to see how the present work of art resembles and differs from the previous ones. One has become a skilled, powerful observer, like a man at a football game who understands the game and its finer points, in contrast with a foreigner who sees only meaningless running and gesturing.

Aesthetics is now at a stage somewhat analogous to that in which biology was in the early eighteenth century, before Linnaeus had worked out a system for analyzing the forms of plants and classifying them by species. Prescientific concepts of species and their interrelations were vague, inconsistent, and full of inherited myths and folklore. The same condition exists today in our thinking about the forms of art. As morphology and classification advanced in biology, they opened the door to all manner of far-reaching investigations on the nature and evolution of life. Often regarded as dull and plodding in themselves, they are indispensable to many deeper and more exciting lines of inquiry. Before distinguishing clearly the main varieties of form and style in art, we cannot go far in studying how they arise in the course of human history; how they influence other cultural factors and are influenced by them; how they can be controlled for human welfare. It is not enough to compare and classify whole arts, as in philosophical "systems of the arts." [2] One must come down to intensive, detailed comparison of examples from different arts and different periods to discover the main underlying types of form, and their principal variants, which cut across the ob-

[2] Cf. T. Munro, *The Arts and Their Interrelations* (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1949), Part Two.

vious but often superficial differences in medium. With a better understanding of form and style in art, we shall be in a better position to attack some of the more attractive problems in aesthetics, such as that of value.

Impatient to decide what art ought to be, we have in the past neglected to find out what it is. Impatient to decide whether we like it or not, we have failed to observe it carefully. We allow endless theoretical, abstract controversies to distract us from careful observation of the work of art itself. Aesthetic morphology calls the scholar or critic back to the concrete object in front of him. It invites him to put aside the screen of associated concepts and disputes which stand between him and the actual picture, poem, or sonata; to see or hear it clearly and thoroughly for what it is. Morphology begins and ends with detailed, analytical observation of the work of art, along with the attempt by each observer to report objectively what he has seen or heard. Through comparison of findings by many observers, it is gradually building a tested body of knowledge about the forms and species of form in art. With this in hand, we can proceed to study how each kind of art operates in human experience: its functions and effects, actual and possible, under varying life conditions.

VI

STYLE IN THE ARTS: A METHOD OF STYLISTIC ANALYSIS*

A. Traits, types, and styles.

1. *Descriptive and evaluative terms.* Some words refer to observable traits in works of art (e.g., red in color; high in pitch), as distinguished from qualities implying value judgments or affective responses (e.g., beautiful, well-proportioned, sublime, ugly, debased). Concepts of types are based on the recurrence of examples possessing a certain trait or quality. "The beautiful" is an evaluative type or category. "Red textile" and "soft music" are descriptive types. Descriptive traits and types may involve qualities and relations directly observable by the senses (e.g., red), or those apperceived as culturally established meanings (e.g., Christianity as suggested by a cross), or both. The former are *presented,* the latter *suggested* traits. "Landscape," "tragedy," "cathedral," "sonata," and "sonnet" are descriptive types of art, and of aesthetic form.

2. *Simple and compound descriptive types.* Simple traits: e.g., red. Compound traits, involving several specifications: e.g., large, oblong, red, and smooth. A simple type is defined in terms of one trait, or very few. For instance, red textiles; curvilinear furniture; music in ¾ time. A compound descriptive type is one whose definition requires several specifications. For instance, furniture with curving lines, gilt finish, and silk brocaded upholstery.

3. *A style of art is a compound descriptive type which requires a comparatively large number of specifications for clear definition.* It

* This outline is intended as an aid in the study of artistic styles. It can be applied to any art, and to any style and period of art, in such problems as (a) defining and comparing particular historic styles; (b) describing the style or styles of a given period; (c) determining the stylistic affinities of a given work of art. It was developed in the author's courses on comparative aesthetics in the Graduate School of Western Reserve University. As originally printed in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (December, 1946) it contained additional study outlines for more detailed analysis. These have been omitted here.

consists of a *combination of traits or characteristics which tend to recur together* in different works of art, or have done so in the art of some particular place and period. It is a recurrent *trait-complex*—a distinctive cluster or configuration of interrelated traits, with a certain relative emphasis and consistency as an organizing principle in various examples, which may otherwise differ greatly. In Gothic architecture: pointed arches, high vaults, pitched roofs, slender piers, thin walls, large stained glass windows, flying buttresses, etc. Also, Wölfflin's definition of Baroque as painterly, recessional, open, with "unified unity" and relative clearness.[1]

4. Not all *trait-complexes* are recognized as "styles." Some occur only once, in a single work of art. To be considered as a definite style, a trait-complex usually has to recur in many works of art which are regarded as important by historians and critics. It has to be regarded as an influential principle of organization in these works rather than as a set of trivial, superficial aspects. Comparatively few recurrent trait-complexes in art have been recognized as styles, and fewer still as major, or great historic, styles. Occasionally a style is distinguished on the basis of a single work of art, as when only one work by a certain artist is known.

5. A *historic* style is conceived in terms of the traits of art which are believed to have existed in some particular period of history, or in the works of some specific people, artist, or group of artists, as distinguished from others. Some styles are *abstract or recurrent,* being defined so as to apply to works of several different periods and places.

6. A *stylistic trait* is a trait regarded as characteristic of a style, and used as one of the specifications in defining it. (It may be characteristic of the style only when found together with certain other traits). In a particular work of art, a stylistic trait is one which tends to identify it as an example of some style.

7. *Essential and nonessential traits.* Some traits are usually regarded as basic and essential to the style, involving many other traits and determining their distinctive mode of interrelation (e.g., "painterly," in Wölfflin's theory of Baroque). Others are regarded

[1] H. Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History: the Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art* (New York, 1932).

as less essential or nonessential; as superficial, variable, optional, dispensable, atypical, or not peculiar to the style in question.

8. *Quantitative comparisons.* Styles, periods, and works of art are often described in terms of "more" and "less," by comparison with others; e.g., the Louis XV style is more curvilinear than the Louis XVI.

9. Stylistic traits, when analyzed and defined clearly, are usually found to be complex and variable in themselves. They are, in other words, *constituent trait-complexes,* which combine and co-operate to produce a style. Each can in turn be analyzed into other traits, which may also occur in different contexts. For example, Wölfflin's "painterly" is not a unitary trait, but a combination of independently variable traits of line, light and dark, color, shape, etc. A style consists in the comparatively persistent, conspicuous recurrence of such a configuration.

10. A constituent trait-complex may be recognized as determining an important variety of a style, even though not essential to the general definition of the style. For example, Banister Fletcher distinguishes "the Palladian motif" within Italian Renaissance architectural style. It consists of "superimposed Doric and Ionic orders which, under the main entablature, frame intervening arches supported on smaller free-standing twin columns, and there are circular openings in the spandrels." [2] This is an occasional, variant feature, not essential to Italian Renaissance style in general.

11. Disagreement exists as to proper *definitions* of chief historic styles; i.e., as to what traits are to be regarded as essential and basic in the Baroque, Gothic, Romantic, Classic, and other styles in various arts.

12. Need for *objective, descriptive study* of styles. For non-evaluative definitions of styles. (Many definitions are controversial because evaluative; e.g., Baroque as "over-decorated.") Need for description of styles as observable in works of art, apart from theorizing about their causation and deeper, spiritual meaning, or about the underlying mental and emotional attitudes—the "spirit of the age"—which they are thought to express. Study of styles hitherto has been hampered by confusion with these related problems. Many of these

[2] *History of Architecture on the Comparative Method* (New York, 1931), p. 659.

problems are highly important in their own right, but require a different approach. Their relation to stylistic analysis will be discussed below.

13. Suggested *intellectual meanings, ideologies, and emotional attitudes* can themselves be integral parts of a work of art and of a style. They can become essential traits of a particular style. The concept of style should not be limited to superficial devices or narrowly formalistic aspects of art. For example, in literature it can include the ideas, beliefs, and attitudes expressed (philosophical, religious, ethical, scientific, etc.) as well as the manner of expressing them.

B. Style-names and their meanings; various bases for distinguishing styles.

1. The following bases are frequently used:

a. Period (including reigns and dynasties): e.g., Sung style; Empire style; Renaissance style; Louis XV style.

b. Place: e.g., European style; north Italian style.

c. People or person (including racial, national, or religious group): Tibetan Buddhist style; Japanese style; Islamic style; style of Wagner, Rubens, or Milton.

d. Product: e.g., Parthenon style.

e. Whichever is used as name, some of the others are usually implied.

2. Styles are also named and distinguished on the basis of certain abstract types or traits: e.g., Baroque, Romantic, Impressionist, Polyphonic. Sometimes on the basis of subject represented: e.g., "The Animal Style."

C. The field of distribution of a style; extensive and restricted styles. The definition and extension of a concept of style.

1. The *distribution* of a style is its occurrence or embodiment in works of art. It can be wide or narrow, extensive or restricted. Such extension occurs along various lines; a style can extend or spread in some ways and contract in others.

a. *Cultural* distribution: extensive, semi-extensive, or restricted, as to different arts and other branches of culture; e.g., in music, painting, and poetry, or in music only. As to different types with-

in an art (e.g., chairs and tables, in furniture). Frequent lag in certain arts; minor arts following major in adoption of a style.

b. *Geographic, ethnic, and national* distribution: in the art of various places, peoples, races, nationalities.

c. *Chronological* distribution; persistent and ephemeral styles. Duration of a style. Fads and fashions. Persistence of Greek architectural styles. Declines and revivals of a style.

d. *Social* distribution; classes of society in a given area or people; age-levels, occupations, sexes, etc., which produce and use the style; e.g., costume styles for boys of noble families; wedding attire for peasant girls; sailors' chanteys.

e. The *productive* distribution or field of production of a style is its occurrence in the making or composition of art; the provenance of works of art embodying it. (Performance, as of music, may or may not be regarded as a part of production.) The *consumptive* distribution or field of consumption is its occurrence in the use or enjoyment of art. They may coincide or diverge considerably, as when products are exported for use elsewhere. They often diverge as to social class: e.g., the manufacture or performance of art by lower-class artisans or actors, for use and enjoyment by aristocrats; manufacture by women, use by men.

f. *Biographical* distribution: occurrence of a style in the career and works of an individual artist, or a portion of them; e.g., in Leonardo's Milanese period.

2. The *total distribution* of a style is its distribution in all the above ways.

a. Major styles or great historic styles are highly extensive in several ways; e.g., Renaissance style.

b. Minor styles are comparatively restricted in all or most of these ways; e.g., El Greco's third style; nineteenth-century Arlesian woman's headdress.

3. The *field of distribution* of a style is the general realm of culture and history within which it has occurred, as marked off in any or all the above ways. Not all works of art within that field are necessarily examples of it. For example, the chronological and geographic field of Baroque style may be defined as "about 1550-1750 in Europe." This does not imply that all art therein was Baroque. Several styles may be distributed in one field, perhaps to varying extents.

4. The *main field of distribution* or main extension of a style is that in which its greatest distribution or most important examples have occurred. Importance may be measured by one or a few outstanding artists rather than by number of products. (This may involve debatable evaluations.) The main field of distribution is distinguished from *subordinate* fields; e.g., late extensions.

5. The *most typical* special field or subfield of a style is that in which it is thought to appear most clearly, fully, and purely; e.g., Rococo in Louis XV furniture. (This is often debatable).

6. The *primary special field, or field of origin,* is that in which the style or definite anticipations of it first appeared. This, too, is often debatable; e.g., early manifestations of Romanticism appeared in poetry, music, garden art, etc., and in Germany, England, France, etc.

7. With respect to their distribution and resemblance, two or more styles can be related as historically *neighboring or remote* styles (geographically, chronologically, culturally, etc.). Seventeenth-century European Baroque in sculpture is a neighbor of seventeenth-century European Baroque in architecture. It is remote from seventeenth-century Indian sculpture, geographically.

8. Styles can be related as *inclusive and included; substyles* or phases of more extensive styles. Restricted styles are usually phases or variants of some extensive style, or mixtures of two or more extensive styles; not isolated occurrences. Florentine style is a substyle in relation to Italian Renaissance style; Botticelli's style is a substyle of Florentine.

9. *Similar styles:* those having important traits in common, even though their occurrence is historically remote. (Influence or causal connection is not necessarily implied).

10. *Opposite or antithetical* styles: those whose essential traits are opposite or strongly contrasting. *Antithetical* examples: objects displaying opposite styles.

11. A *style-group* is a set of styles closely related to each other as neighboring, inclusive, or similar. An extensive style, such as "Renaissance," is sometimes regarded as a single style including many others (e.g., Florentine, Raphaelesque); sometimes as a group of distinct, related styles.

12. The same or partly similar styles in different places are often called by different names: e.g., picturesque, romantic, moribana,

free, naturalistic. The same name is often applied to different or partly different styles: e.g., "classical."

13. *Extensive and restricted styles in various arts.* Recent trends in theories of style.

a. The visual arts. The nature of historic styles has been most thoroughly studied here. Recent trend to more extensive conception of styles.

b. Music: provincial nature of much theorizing; mostly restricted to modern European styles; neglect of oriental and primitive.

c. Literature: backwardness of style theory. Confusion between various meanings of style: e.g., the epic style or type; style as good writing.

d. General trend, esp. in Germany, to extensive definition of certain styles, such as "Baroque"—i.e., as applicable to several arts, and even to non-artistic fields such as philosophy, science, and government.

14. The distribution of a style depends in part on the way in which that style is *abstractly defined;* the traits in which it is said to consist. Many style-names are defined in various ways. According to one definition, the style may be restricted to a narrow field; according to another, the specified traits may be found elsewhere also. Very broad or vague, abstract definition tends to make the concept more extensive, by implication—i.e., it will probably cover more different examples.

15. The abstract definition of a style is (from a logical standpoint) its *intension or connotation.* Its concrete distribution or occurrence in art is its *extension or denotation.* The distribution to which a definition of a style would theoretically apply is its *implied* distribution. (This is not always clearly recognized.) Its *alleged* distribution consists of objects or fields which are commonly regarded as exemplifying it. (Actually, they may not do so.)

16. The alleged distribution of a style is sometimes *inconsistent* with its abstract definition as currently accepted. This produces confusion in theory. Theoretical studies should aim to revise either (a) the definition or (b) the account of how the style is distributed; its field and concrete examples, or both, so as to make them coincide. Alteration in the name may also help; e.g., to specify "northern

Baroque." Ideally, the concept of a style should apply clearly to all alleged examples of it. (These constitute its *verified* distribution). The concept should not apply, at least in equal degree, to objects in other fields, not classed as examples of it. For example, if we define "Classical" very broadly as "balanced, restrained, unified," we should not treat it as restricted to a certain European period. It will apply to many periods and places.

17. *Fields of investigation.* These are subjects, areas of knowledge, or groups of phenomena which are marked off for study, research, writing, teaching, etc. Some fields are commonly recognized as distinct realms of nature or social culture, or as sciences in which these are described and interpreted; e.g., the ethnology of bronze age Europe. An investigator can mark off his own field in any way he wishes, as a career or temporary study. He may have a *general field* (e.g., history of painting) and one or more *special fields* of emphasis (e.g., seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish landscape painting). *Subfields* can also be marked off: e.g., "with special reference to the early works of Hobbema."

a. *Problems of style* may be raised with special reference to such a field or subfield of investigation. To what extent does a certain style, as defined in a certain way, occur within it? For example, "to what extent does Baroque style occur in Elizabethan drama, or the works of Bach?" To what extent does the actual, historic distribution of a certain style coincide with a certain field of investigation, as arbitrarily marked off by the student in advance? Does it cover all of this field? Is it restricted to this field?

b. A field of investigation may itself be marked off on a basis of style, or of the supposed examples of a style within a certain area of culture and history; e.g., one may decide to study and describe "the development of Rococo style in eighteenth-century French art." This assumes in advance a general conception of Rococo style and its distribution. A subfield would be "the development of Rococo style in northern French domestic architecture after 1770."

c. A field of investigation may be marked off on a purely abstract, conceptual basis: e.g., "the concept of Rococo style." One may then bring in examples from various arts, times, and places.

D. Three ways of defining a style-name: as a *period of history;* as a *historic style;* as an *abstract recurrent type.* Resulting confusions in theory.

1. Names of major styles (Gothic, Baroque, Romantic, etc.) usually have several meanings. Name used in *three or more senses.* Starts in one, spreads to others.

a. *Periods.* The name may refer to some field, historic division or period: e.g., Greek; the Louis XV; or Romantic period. Implying a certain time-span, place, people, and group of art works produced therein.

b. *Historic styles; period styles.* The name may refer to certain traits, supposed to characterize the art of that period; e.g., "Romantic" as a historic or period style or trend, occurring in a certain division of history. May be understood as restricted to one art such as architecture, or as extending through several arts.

c. *Abstract styles or types.* The name may refer to some *recurrent or persistent type,* not limited to any one period; a trait or set of traits appearing in different historic periods; e.g., "Romantic" as a type occurring in many periods, arts, and cultures. Usually defined more briefly and abstractly than a historic style; involving only a few selected traits. (Often spelled without capital letter: romantic).

2. Resultant confusions in theory: Oversimplified conceptions of historic periods. Ambiguity: e.g., of "Renaissance." Ambiguity of "Baroque": as a period; as a historic style; as an abstract recurrent type.

3. Need of distinguishing three alternative senses or types of definition for each major style-name or period-name. For example:

a. The Baroque *period;* the Baroque age in Europe.

b. The Baroque *style;* the Baroque period style.

c. The Baroque *type;* the recurrent, abstract, or general Baroque style.

4. Each sense stands for a different line of inquiry:

a. Historical periodization; division of history into periods. Divisions of history. (See § E below).

b. Definition and description of period styles. (See §§ *F, G, H, I).*

c. Recognition and description of abstract recurrent types or styles, through comparison of remote styles. (See § *J* below).

5. The *history of a style-name* is often different from that of the style it now signifies. A certain name may be applied successively to different types and styles. Change and extension in the application of a style-name has proceeded in various directions: (a) from a historic division to a concept of style; (b) from a style or movement to a historic division in which it flourished; (c) from a historic style to an abstract, recurrent type (by extending the definition to cover similar examples in remote periods or places), or vice versa. (The term "baroque" was applied to an abstract type—extravagant or bizarre—before it was applied to a historic style or period).

E. The division of history into periods; epochs in the history of culture and of art.

1. A style-name can be defined as a certain *historical division;* a field or "period" in the sense including specification as to period, place, and people. "Gothic period." "Gothic" as meaning North European, esp. German, French, English, between 1100 and 1500 A.D. Includes many different styles. "Gothic" applied to a work of art then indicates its provenance; not necessarily its style.

2. *History and prehistory.* Geologic and biologic (evolutionary) epochs. The vastness of human prehistory.

3. Divisions in the historical process are made in different ways, and into sections of different magnitude, size, and duration, as follows: (a) into arbitrary chronological periods or time-spans, e.g., centuries, millennia; (b) into places, regions, spatially or geographically; (c) into peoples, racial, political, linguistic, and religious groupings. (d) Combined basis: period-place-people.

4. *Political epochs.* History written, and divisions marked off, on basis of rise and fall of empires, dynasties, etc. Conquests, dominations, boundaries, rules. Individual reigns. History as political history.

5. *Culture-epochs.* Historic divisions marked off in accordance with supposed main divisions in cultural evolution, crucial turn-

ing-points, epoch-making events. Supposed continuity and similarity within an epoch.

a. Past theories of culture-epochs; philosophies of history. Supposed laws and patterns of history: e.g., Buddhist cycles; the "old and new dispensations" of medieval Christianity.

b. Modern theories of stages in cultural evolution. Anthropological periods: e.g., neolithic. Socio-economic; feudal period; industrial revolution. Intellectual and artistic: e.g., Dark Ages, Renaissance; Enlightenment.

c. Relatively active and inactive cultural epochs. Cultural flowerings; florescences; "great periods"; ages of greatest productivity and progress. Movements; schools. Lives of individual leaders. Particular achievements; discoveries, inventions, productions, works of art. Culture-epochs as marked off on the above bases. Inclusive and included; more and less active. Principal culture-epochs, selected on basis of cultural activity, esp. flowerings. Marked off on combined period-place-people basis.

d. Selective cultural history, with emphasis on principal culture-epochs. Relations to political history. Cultural divisions do not always correspond with political (e.g., with dynasties and reigns), but are often so designated: e.g., Sung dynasty, Louis XV, as periods in culture and art. Obscuring of culture-epochs through demarcation in political or other extraneous terms. Need of unprejudiced periodization into culture-epochs, major and minor: e.g., on a framework of arbitrary space-time and political divisions, but with accurate indication of intrinsic cultural divisions, whether or not conforming to these others.

e. The problem of *characterizing* the principal culture-epochs, in terms of culture-patterns, achievements, modes of living, and major trends therein. Gradual revision and clarification of concepts of culture-epochs, through increasing knowledge. Need of redefinition of old names of periods; abandonment of some; new names.

6. *The history of special cultural factors; especially of the arts.*

a. The division of cultural history into the histories of various threads or factors; of persistent types of human activity: e.g., religion, art, philosophy, science, law, industry, the family. History of a particular art or type of art: e.g., the chair.

b. Different periodization in the history of different factors: e.g., of different arts and sciences.

c. *Art epochs* as divisions in the history of an art, group of arts, or phase in art.

d. *Fields* for investigation, and their cultural "backgrounds": e.g., Japanese prints and their cultural background. Special fields as emphasized, or focal areas of discussion.

e. The problem of characterizing the principal art epochs. *Concepts of styles as answers thereto.*

f. Frequent diversity of styles within a given period. Resultant problems of name and definition.

F. Defining a historic or period style; general stylistic analysis. The styles of individual artists.

1. A style as a set of traits in the art of a certain field or period; as its most distinctive, important traits: e.g., the Gothic style as the dominant style of the Gothic period, but not the only style practiced therein. "Gothic" (e.g., as applied to a chair) indicating both style and provenance.

2. Style as distinct from period of origin; as capable of revival and imitation. Non-period examples of a style. Extending the definition of a style, to cover a larger field. "Gothic" as indicating style but not provenance, as in a modern "Gothic" chair. "Gothic adaptation"; "neo-Gothic." Need of clarity as to which meaning (1 or 2) is intended.

3. The style of an *individual artist or school* (e.g., Corot; Barbizon) is usually a subject for general stylistic analysis, and is to be defined, as in the case of a period style. It usually involves generalizing on a number of works of art (unless one alone exists), and sometimes on various periods. An individual or personal style represents a division of history, and is a very restricted period style.

4. In the revision of old concepts of styles and the development of new ones, there are two basic *types of problem;* one of art history and one of terminology:

a. What is the *historical correlation* between certain trait-complexes in art and certain fields of distribution (groups of art-works, locations, periods of history, etc.)? To what extent is a certain

trait-complex historically connected with a certain field (realm of art, period, place, etc.)?

b. Assuming the existence of such a correlation, what is the most expedient *name* for the trait-complex or style concerned? Can some traditional name such as Baroque or Romantic be effectively used, in spite of its ambiguous associations, through precise redefinition and qualifying terms? For example, not simply "Baroque," but "late seventeenth-century Spanish architectural Baroque." Or should a new name be coined for the trait-complex? The answer will depend on the extent of present ambiguity and confusion, the possibility of authoritative redefinition or renaming, etc.

5. *Requirements of a thorough description of a historic style.* Definition of a *style-name* such as "Gothic" or "style of J. S. Bach." (Brief dictionary definitions must be more abridged).

a. Specification of the *main field of distribution* of the style; the place, period, division of history, art or arts, etc., in which the style is regarded as having flourished. *General* field: e.g., late medieval European arts. Main *special* fields or subfields, regarded as presenting distinct and important stylistic traits, requiring separate description: e.g., French Gothic, Spanish Gothic; Gothic architecture; Gothic book illumination. Bach's early works, late works; works for organ; cantatas, etc. *Typical examples* in each special field.

b. Specification of *stylistic traits* regarded as constituting the style. Detailed traits and modes of combining them. Trait-complexes or connected sets of traits. Include basic, integrative principles as well as list of detailed traits.

c. *General essentials:* traits regarded as most characteristic, basic, necessary and distinctive for the style in general, conceived extensively, as applied to the whole main field of distribution: e.g., traits most characteristic of Gothic style in general, and pervading all subdivisions of it; basic to "the Gothic spirit." Applying to Gothic style in all arts, regions, early and late phases, etc., and distinguishing Gothic from other styles therein. Often these can best be described by contrast with previous or subsequent, opposite styles.

d. *Specific essentials:* traits regarded as most characteristic of the style in a particular special field or subfield: e.g., for Gothic

architecture, flying buttresses; for Gothic book illumination, partly naturalistic ornamentation and pictorial backgrounds, rather than flat geometric. Specific essentials may be regarded as different means to the same general essentials or basic, common style-traits; e.g., flying buttresses in architecture, and certain traits of Gothic sculpture, painting and music, may be various ways of achieving "the Gothic spirit" through different mediums and techniques. Specific essentials may also be given for main geographic, chronological, or cultural divisions: e.g., early and late Baroque; northern and southern Baroque; Catholic and Protestant Baroque. These are constituent trait-complexes or substyles, characteristic of the style in a certain special field only. (For example, the essential traits of late French Gothic, and Gothic style in furniture, are substyles of Gothic in general).

e. Stylistic traits peculiar to a special field or subdivision of the style are to be regarded as nonessential, variable, or optional for the style in general; as somewhat characteristic but not universally so. Predominance of vertical lines is essential for the Perpendicular style (a late variety of English Gothic), but not for all Gothic.

f. *Typical examples.* Particular works of art should be cited to illustrate each main *special field* of the style, and each *trait* regarded as essential to the style in that special field. (For example, Wölfflin gives Bernini's "Ecstasy of St. Theresa" as an example of the "painterly" quality in seventeenth-century sculpture. He contrasts it with earlier Italian examples, so as to emphasize period rather than nationality).

g. *Clear naming.* Current style names are usually vague and ambiguous. The name should briefly indicate the special field or substyle intended, if any; e.g., perpendicular Gothic in English architecture. Traits essential only to this special field should be distinguished from those common to other varieties of Gothic. If a style has been defined on the basis of a narrow field, that should be evident in its name or designation; e.g., do not generalize about Baroque in general from a study of early eighteenth-century south German Catholic church interiors. A broad general name such as Baroque should not be used without qualifying terms if conceived in a restricted way, unless for occasional abbreviation where context makes the restricted definition clear.

6. *Comparison of styles.* Essentials may be listed in various *orders:* in order of importance, as they are believed to be distinctive and fundamental to the style. One style at a time; i.e., all essentials of Style 1, then all essentials of Style 2, etc. In parallel columns, or otherwise comparing two or more styles at once, point by point. (Wölfflin contrasts Classic and Baroque under five pairs of opposite traits. Under each pair as a heading, he contrasts them in one special field after another: sculpture, architecture, etc., with examples of each trait.) If the works of art concerned are similar in basic framework, style essentials can be contrasted with reference to different parts of the framework, Banister Fletcher thus contrasts in parallel columns Gothic and Renaissance cathedrals, as to how they treat windows, roofs, floorplans, etc.

7. Try to eliminate ambiguous, evaluative, and unnecessarily controversial terms. Do not define one style in terms of others, if possible; e.g., do not list "Classic" or "Baroque" as traits, unless these terms have been precisely defined. State essentials in terms of descriptive traits and types of form, medium, and technique. Traits may be described in terms of tendency to emphasize or minimize a certain other trait, or in terms of a certain range of variation between extremes. What is the minimum of a certain trait which a work of art must possess to exemplify the style? The maximum which it may possess, and still exemplify the style?

8. Include the following kinds of traits if possible:

a. Traits concerned with the use of certain *materials, mediums, or techniques,* in so far as observable in the finished product or performance: e.g., gilt, ormolu, silk, fresco, divided color, impasto, airbrush, piano, male chorus.

b. Traits concerned with treatment of certain *components* in form: e.g., emphasis on line or surface texture; on curved lines, with frequent changes in direction; on rhythm or frequent key modulation; on suggestions of calmness or agitation; on intellectual content or sense-imagery.

c. Traits concerned with modes of *composition:* e.g., thematic (complex patterns; ABA framework patterns); utilitarian (for defense against swords and arrows; for political propaganda; for magical rites); representative (Greek mythical figures; naturalistic landscapes; satirical portraits); expository (mystic symbolism;

explicit logical argument); relations between modes (degree of specialization; sacrifice of representation to design).

9. Ask whether current definitions are *too broad and vague* to exclude other styles as intended, or *too narrow and specific* to include all the examples and varieties intended. Definitions can be altered by changing connotation, denotation, or both.

G. The empirical approach to definitions of historic styles. Developing new conceptions of styles. Inductive emphasis. Valuable for fresh, open-minded observation and generalization, unprejudiced by past theories. May involve much detailed research.

1. Mark off a certain field, period, or group of products: e.g., South German pottery from 1400 to 1450. Note its subfields: a.o., localities, decades, chief artists, schools, factories.

2. Compare the products therein. Classify them according to similarities and differences of form, material, technique, etc. Look for recurrence of certain combinations of traits.

3. Name these in some neutral, tentative way: for example, as *Trait-complex A,* Trait-complex B, etc. Define each: e.g., Trait-complex A consists in traits 1, 2, 3, etc. (Do not be too quick to call these by traditional style-names; even by names currently applied to these fields and traits. The ambiguity of the traditional concepts may confuse and prejudice fresh comparison and generalization).

4. Note extent to which a given trait-complex is associated with a certain *special field* or subfield; e.g., Trait-complex A with works in a certain medium, produced in a certain region, period, factory, etc.

5. If there is high correlation, one may *name* it, tentatively, as the style or one of the styles of that special field: e.g., eighteenth-century Dresden porcelain style; style of John Smith, in his early or Plymouth period. Use traditional style-names cautiously, with specific definitions.

6. Generalize on *more extensive* styles or trait-complexes, as characterizing larger fields: e.g., the Rococo style in porcelain statuettes as including various substyles—French, German, Austrian, English, etc. Distinguish substyles from each other in terms of variable, constituent trait-complexes.

7. Note occurrence of *more than one* trait-complex or style in a given field, as contemporary, coextensive. Which is dominant? Are fields identical or partly divergent? For example, distributed on different social or economic levels, as in costumes, furniture and utensils of upper and lower class in a given place and time. Do they coincide chronologically? Is one declining while the other rises? Are they in competition or supplementary?

H. The conceptual approach to definitions of historic styles. Applying and revising existing concepts. Deductive emphasis. Observation limited and directed by hypotheses. Valuable as utilizing previous theories.

1. Begin with a given *style-name,* and find how it has been defined by leading authorities, including dictionaries and art historians. Note its abstract definition; its alleged distribution and typical examples, according to each authority.

2. Note also various theories as to which styles are *antithetical* to or radically different from each other; e.g., Wölfflin's contrast of Classic and Baroque; Banister Fletcher's of Gothic and Renaissance. Note alleged field and typical examples of each style, according to each theory. Note how examples are said to illustrate essential traits.

3. Apply and test these theories by systematic *observation.* Take each trait-complex which is used to define a style. Consider each of its constituent traits, one at a time and in combination.

4. Do they really exist to a high degree throughout the *alleged field* and *typical examples* of that style, as maintained by the theory under discussion? Watch out for examples "hand-picked" to prove a theory, and not really representative of the field. Watch out for generalizations about a larger field than the examples presented justify. Alleged typical examples should be typical, not only of the abstract traits held essential, but also of the *whole field* which is said to manifest the style. If other styles are admitted to exist therein, this should be stated. Does Baroque as defined exist only in *some* seventeenth-century European painting? In what special fields therein? Are there some important painters (e.g., Poussin) who do *not*

exemplify all the traits defined by Wölfflin as essentially Baroque, but who belong to the *field* indicated by him as covered by Baroque? To what extent do *all* works by the artists he mentioned actually exhibit the alleged essentials? If such traits do not exist in these cases to a fairly high degree, the abstract definition of the style is inconsistent with its alleged denotation.

5. If so, how should the theory be revised? By correcting the description of field and distribution, so as to recognize the existence of diverse or variant styles therein? By restating list of essential traits so as to cover a wider variety of examples? By changing name of style so as to restrict it to a smaller field, where alleged essentials actually occur? For example, "Northern, Protestant Baroque" and "Southern, Catholic Baroque."

6. Possible *extensions* of a style-concept to broader fields: e.g., extension of "Baroque" from visual arts to seventeenth-century literature and music. Take a given trait-complex, proposed as a definition of the style in general, or in regard to Special Field 1 (e.g., seventeenth-century visual arts). Ask, in regard to each trait, to what extent it applies also to Special Field 2 (e.g., to seventeenth-century music) and Special Field 3 (e.g., seventeenth-century literature). Which of the traits are applicable to certain special fields only? Which to all special fields, hence suitable as general essentials of the style? How must the general definition be revised to cover all special fields?

7. Styles once regarded as *antithetical* are often found to have much in common. This requires more precise definition of each as to essential traits, special fields, and typical examples. Traits must often be defined in terms of a relatively higher or lower degree or frequency rather than of total presence or absence. Intermediate, borderline, or transitional substyles may be discovered. One must ask, in regard to alleged essentials of Style 1: Are they also to be found in the field and examples of Style 2? (For example, can some alleged Baroque traits be found in some early sixteenth-century painting, supposedly Classic? To what extent?) If Baroque is defined in terms of a trait which is not peculiar to it, the definition is faulty as not really differentiating it from other styles. Early style concepts are often thus through excessive generality; e.g., Winckelmann's

phrase about Greek art: "noble simplicity and silent greatness." Does all Greek art have these traits? Does no other style have them to a like extent?

8. The history of a style theory often begins with a vague, broad conception: e.g., "the Greek style," or "the Japanese style," as consisting in certain general traits which are assumed to characterize that entire field. Later, the field is found to contain more diversity of styles. The original concept was oversimplified. Scholars then come to think more in terms of specific styles or substyles within various divisions of the field. What they can say about the whole field (e.g., all Greek art) has to be increasingly general and subject to exception. A trait-complex originally regarded as characterizing the whole field may be found to characterize only a subfield (e.g., late Greek sculpture). This requires more specific names for styles and substyles, and more exact specification of the field, examples, and essential traits therein. Different substyles or variant styles, each a complex of traits, must be specified for different subfields.

9. *Comparison of various theories of a certain style.* Definitions by various authors: e.g., of Baroque, by Wölfflin, by Preserved Smith,[1] and by P. H. Lang.[2] After testing each individually through application to examples, ask:

a. To what extent and how do the theories agree and disagree on abstract definition or general essentials of the style?

b. On general field of distribution? How extensively is the style conceived by each? For example, by one as restricted to visual arts; by another as in music and literature also.

c. On special fields of distribution, in which the style is said to occur? On specific essential traits or abstract definition of the style with respect to each special field? For example, how do authors A and B agree on nature of Baroque traits in music?

d. On typical examples of the style in each field? For example, is Bach regarded as Baroque? All or some of his works? In what respects?

e. On antithetical styles; their fields (general and special) and typical examples? For example, Baroque and Classic.

[1] *A History of Modern Culture* (New York, 1930), Vol. I, Ch. XIX.
[2] *Music in Western Civilization* (New York, 1941), Chs. X and XI.

f. On similar styles, substyles, variants, transitional and borderline styles, late extensions, etc.? For example, is Rococo a variety of Baroque or a separate style? Is Impressionism?

g. How can historical inaccuracies, inconsistencies and inadequate nomenclature best be corrected? To what extent should previous theories and usage be followed?

h. Proposed revision or new theory of the style, or pair of contrasting styles. Include statement as to general field and essentials; special fields and specific essentials for each; typical examples for each special field, and how they illustrate essentials; relations between similar and antithetical styles, variants and borderline styles.

I. Describing a work of art in terms of styles; particular stylistic analysis.

1. *Aims and uses.* Particular stylistic analysis as a special kind of form-analysis or morphological description. It describes the object, not only in terms of abstract traits and types such as red, blue, tragic, comic, etc., but in relation to concepts of recognized styles—combinations of traits which have tended to recur together in the history of art. Use of concepts of styles for abbreviated description of a work of art. (To say "a typical impressionist painting" says much in a few words). This depends on existence of clear, accepted definitions of styles. Use as means of locating the work of art in relation to art history and general history, and to a systematic classification of types and styles of art. Use as approach to definite characterization of the object, through locating it under more and more headings, with differentiae; summarizing its stylistic affiliations: e.g., as an example of two or more styles at once, or as intermediate between two. Testing of hypothetical definitions of styles, and hypotheses as to typical or standard examples of various styles. Reciprocal relations between general and particular stylistic analysis.

2. *Typical examples* of a style, embodying all of the traits regarded as essential to that style in a specified field. *Atypical or partial examples,* involving some only. Conformities and nonconformities with the style in question; in essentials and in nonessentials. *Antithetical examples;* i.e., objects antithetical to a certain style, as embodying the opposites of its essential traits.

3. Judgments of more and less in comparing works of art. Extent to which they exemplify one or another style. (See § L). Standard examples as measuring-rods for comparison.

4. *Style and historical provenance.* (a) Style as distinct from "authenticity"; it may be described apart from knowledge about origin of the work of art. (b) Method of analysis may differ, however, according to whether provenance has been demonstrated on other grounds. Tentative application of stylistic hypotheses where origin is known or presumed.

J. Abstract recurrent types; non-period styles.

1. A style-name is sometimes extended to cover similar styles in *remote* periods and places: e.g., "Gothico-Buddhist sculpture in Central Asia"; [1] "Baroque style in East Indian sculpture and architecture." [2] (The explanation of such resemblance is a separate problem: e.g., as due to influence or parallelism).

2. *Narrow and broad definitions* of a style-name; i.e., with many or few specifications; as implying a complex of many traits, or only one or two: (a) as defined with many specifications, a style is less likely to recur in remote divisions of history; (b) as defined very broadly, in terms of one trait only, it becomes a simple, abstract type, likely to recur often; (c) as defined in intermediate way, with few specifications, occasional recurrence is possible.

3. Historians of art and culture, noting occasional surprising resemblances between remote styles of art, sometimes describe them by extending the concept of a familiar historic style (esp. European) to cover such remote but similar styles. Replacing former different names for similar styles, or supplementing them. A phase in the broad, comparative approach to cultural history.

4. Frequent vagueness as to definition of style-name and list of traits which are held to recur. Danger of confusion through using style-name in a broader sense than usual.

[1] See R. Grousset, *Civilizations of the East* (New York, 1931, 1934): "India," p. 124f.; "China," p. 177f. J. Strzygowski, "The Afghan Stuccos of the N.R.F. Collection," (New York, Stora Gallery, n.d.).

[2] W. Cohn, *Indische Plastik* (Berlin: Cassirer, 1923), p. 45. G. Jouveau-Dubreuil, *Archéologie du sud de l'Inde* (Paris, 1914).

5. Confusion from dubious philosophies of history (e.g., Spengler), asserting regular "laws" of recurrence and parallelism.

6. Need of unprejudiced observations and comparative analysis. Description of analogies and recurrences can be given in terms of form-traits, with facts on distribution (period-place-people), without theorizing on causal explanations; e.g., on diffusionism or parallelism.

7. There are innumerable names of abstract types in art. We consider here only those also applied to historic styles: e.g., romantic, classic.

K. Trends in style; the historical sequence of types and styles. Constituent style-trends.

1. Historical studies of art. Stylistic descriptions plus information on provenance of art (period, place, people, artist) allow *charting of trends* and successive changes in style. What changes have occurred? When? Where? Among what groups and individual artists?

2. Such studies are commonly mixed with (a) *evaluative* judgments and (b) theories or assumptions about the *causal* explanation of these changes, the "why" of styles and style-trends. The mixture often involves confused thinking. There is need of more purely morphological accounts of style-trends, which can later on be interpreted causally and otherwise. Description of changes without raising difficult questions of explanation. Such accounts should describe the following:

3. Sequences in the styles produced by various individual artists: e.g., Picasso's Blue period; Cubist period, etc.

4. Sequences in the growth, change, and decline of historic styles. The chronological order, geographical and ethnic distribution of the principal styles.

5. General patterns, if any, in the growth and decline of historic styles. Alternation of Classic and Romantic trends. Recurrent sequences in the art of various peoples: e.g., Geometric, Archaic, Classic, Baroque, Rococo. Recurrent phases in the life history of a style: e.g., early or archaic; high, developed, or ripe; late or decadent. Do analogous phases of different styles resemble each other in any way? "Baroque" as name for a late phase in any style.[1]

[1] See W. Cohn, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

6. Resemblances between remote styles; their chronological and other distribution; when and where analogous style-trends have occurred.

7. The widening distribution of a style as it spreads from one art to others; from one social class to others; from one age level to others; from one region or nation to others. Its narrowing distribution during decline. For example, spread from upper to lower classes or vice versa, with earlier decline in class of origin. Peasant styles resembling earlier aristocratic styles.

8. Differences among arts and regions as to speed of change, extension or restriction of styles: e.g., certain arts relatively static and others in rapid flux (Egyptian official religious sculpture; recent Post-impressionism). Differences among styles as to speed of change; persistent and ephemeral styles. Persistence of certain styles amid surrounding change, as conservative, retardés, academic, archaistic. Radical, new style-trends, avancés: e.g., *"Il dolce stil nuovo"; "art nouveau."*

9. What styles and types tend to flourish together, in same division of history. Which seem more inconsistent, incompatible. Actions and reactions, from one extreme to another; where and how they occur.

10. Differences between culture-epochs as to what arts, what types of art, and what styles of art are dominant therein. Sequence in growth and decline.

11. Relative priority among styles of individual artists. To what extent one antedated the other. Originality apart from possible influence or derivation.

12. *Constituent style-trends or trend-complexes* as variables within a general style-trend; e.g., the change from Gothic to Renaissance involved specific trends in many arts, types of form, compound parts, etc. Specific, correlated changes within a given area or subfield. Architectural trends in buttresses, in walls, in windows, etc. Pictorial trends in subject, color, perspective, etc. Musical trends in harmony, rhythm, orchestration, etc., as from Classic to Romantic. Wölfflin's five "developments" from Classic to Baroque: e.g., "from the linear to the painterly."

13. A style does not change all at once, at a uniform pace. In some respects, *opposite* trends may occur: e.g., increasing Classicism in some respects along with increasing Romanticism in others. Need

of detailed, unprejudiced comparison between earlier and later phases of a style. Concomitant variations; positive and negative correlations among variables.

14. A *culture-epoch* or art-epoch thus regarded will appear dynamically, as a spatio-temporal continuum within which many diverse changes are taking place, in various respects and directions.

15. A *style* will appear as a distinctive and relatively persistent set of important correlated traits during a certain period. It is an unstable system of variable factors in art which has reached a condition of temporary, partial equilibrium.

16. Possible regular series, patterns, recurrences, to be noted in constituent style-trends, through chronological plotting of changes in specific traits. Recurrent phases and cycles.

17. Main or comprehensive trends as made up of many constituent trends, with some oppositions canceling out. Short-range and long-range trends in style. Minor reactions from the main trend.

18. History of specific traits or trait-complexes (e.g., geometric linear shape) as entering successively into various styles or larger trait-complexes; as associated first with one context, then another; e.g., geometric patterns in tribal art and in modern cubist art. Note differences.

19. History of a style includes noting where and when it occurs *as a whole* or nearly so; its florescence. Also, where and when it occurs as a variant or partial revival; where and when its main constituent trends occur in other contexts—e.g., as partial anticipations or surviving vestiges of the style in question.

L. Description of style in quantitative terms; the measurement of art.

1. *Importance of quantitative measurement* as indicating stage of advancement of a subject toward scientific status. To what extent applicable to art?

a. Transition from qualitative to quantitative relations as a goal of science. But qualities and their relations are essential phenomena of art. Not necessary to destroy or ignore them in studying them quantitatively; i.e., in inquiring what aspects of aesthetic form are susceptible to measurement.

b. Danger of error through premature, specious application of

quantitative methods in aesthetics; esp. of methods devised for use in other fields. Deceptive claims to accuracy.

c. Opposite danger from indiscriminate antagonism toward all quantitative investigation of art. Mystic, romantic attitudes. No harm in introducing measurement when possible and useful.

d. In no science, aesthetic or other, can an object or event be measured in all respects, or in many at once. Need of arbitrary simplification; selection of certain attributes or modes of variation, such as heat or rise and fall in prices. In all fields, some phenomena can easily be detached and measured; others are bound up in complex variables and hard to observe or measure separately.

2. *Presented factors in form more easily measured than suggestive, on the whole.*

a. Presented factors in form are those directly observable; presented to sense-perception. They can be compared with standard norms.

b. Measurement possible of presented spatial development in general; especially of sizes and shapes: e.g., of pictures, statues, vases, etc., in two or three dimensions. Sizes of parts; ratios between them; intervals or voids between parts: e.g., columns in building. Shapes of areas, solids, voids, and complex objects made of them, whether regular or irregular. Relations of symmetry, asymmetry: e.g., in painting, ceramics, sculpture, architecture.

c. Temporal developments. Durations, when determinate in forms as sets of directions, or in actual performance: e.g., of musical tones and durations; motion-picture shots and scenes; radio plays. Parts and wholes, relations of sequence and simultaneity. Tempo; rhythm.

d. Qualitative scales: e.g., color (hue, value, chroma); pitch, loudness, timbre.

e. Intensity, strength, purity, etc., of certain qualitative stimuli —brightness of illumination; intensity of color; loudness of sound, purity or mixture of timbre, etc.

f. Magnitudes and frequencies of specified traits or combinations of traits within a work of art: e.g., relative amounts of red in two pictures; extent of red area; amount of red contained in purples and oranges; number of red spots in relation to size, as compared with other colors. Frequency in music of certain chord-progressions, cadences, modulations, etc.

g. Amounts of resemblance and difference among units of a group, as to specified traits: e.g., relative amounts of contrast in hue, in two pictures or textiles. Amount of thematic repetition; variation; regularity or irregularity.

h. Such magnitudes, frequencies, and orders can be measured in a single work of art; in a group of them (e.g., in those produced in a certain period or locality, or by artists of a certain type); or in comparing two or more groups or series of them. Such measurements may provide basis for partially quantitative description of styles and trends: e.g., the relative frequency and curvature of curved lines in Louis XV and Louis XVI furniture styles. Frequency of modulation in Bach and Stravinsky.

i. *Correlations* between variable factors in art form. Tendency of certain traits to occur together, or not to occur together: e.g., relative sizes of walls, windows, vaults, buttresses, in Romanesque and Gothic architecture. Basis for causal inferences, but these lead outside morphology.

3. *Measurement of suggestive factors:* e.g., poetic imagery; suggested emotions in music; representation and symbolism in painting.

a. Direct, full observation impossible. Variable individual and cultural factors involved. Suggestive stimuli often vague and ambiguous. Hard to measure amount, size, intensity, etc.

b. Numerical groups and series of ideas, events, etc.: e.g., series of 12 heroic exploits in literature.

c. Calculation of *relative frequencies* of certain types of suggestion in art: e.g., use of a certain type of image in Shakespeare, or in Elizabethan literature. Frequency of certain words, types of character, situations, incidents, as clues to nature of styles and trends. Relative frequency of certain types of plot and of causal organization: e.g., those involving magic or divine intervention, in early and late tales in "Arabian Nights."

d. Trait or type whose frequency is to be counted must be clearly defined, and recognizable with some objectivity; not one whose existence in a particular case is open to debate. If trait vague or dubious, all resultant statistics are specious: e.g., Sorokin on "sensate" art.

e. Correlations between frequencies of two or more traits or trends, suggestive or presentative. Prediction of future trends in style on basis of comparative frequencies.

4. Some *types and styles* of art are more easily measurable than others, in both presented and suggestive factors.

a. *"Musica mensurata."* "Geometric" and other highly regular types in all arts are more easily measurable than romantic types. In romantic types, measurement harder because of irregularity, vagueness, apparent incommensurability, extreme variety, subtle and blurred transitions. Presented factors can be measured nevertheless. Irregular, biomorphic lines in painting can be mathematically described.

b. Classic art combines regular and irregular, easy and hard-to-measure. Much Greek, Roman, and Renaissance art produced by numerical measure and ratio: Vitruvius; Hambidge; Birkhoff on Chinese vases.

c. Tendencies toward rational, scientific development usually go with regularity and measurability: e.g., in utilitarian form; Greek architecture; modern tools and machines.

5. *The refinement of quantitative estimates* as an approach to measurement, where numerical accuracy is impossible. Judgments of more and less. Rough estimates of joint effect, average, or over-all trend in a set of complex factors.

a. Can be used in comparing two or more *works of art,* as to specified traits or types: e.g., conformity to a certain *style.* (This picture is more Baroque than that.) Ambiguity of style-names now makes accurate estimate difficult. Conformity to a certain type; degree to which a certain trait is present or emphasized: e.g., ornateness or plainness; subordination of decoration to utilitarian framework; emphasis on color or on line; degree of complexity of pattern.

b. Can be used in comparing two or more *styles:* e.g., Louis XV furniture is more ornate than seventeenth-century American Colonial.

c. Can be used in comparing two or more *style-trends, periods, localities,* etc.: e.g., the Renaissance trend to naturalism in painting was earlier in Italy than in Germany.

d. *The method of comparative ranking.* A means of securing the following: more precise grading, in the opinion of an individual observer; gradual introduction of numerical terms; i.e., of "first, second," etc., instead of "very, slightly," etc.; comparison

and consensus of opinion among different observers; estimate of individual's ability to observe and compare traits of form. (Not a problem of morphology, but of aesthetic psychology).

e. *Requirements for reliable estimate:* e.g., objectivity and clear definition of the trait, criterion, or basis of comparison. The trait used should not be evaluative or otherwise highly controversial: e.g., more beautiful; more romantic; more realistic; more unified. Many traits are vague or ambiguous as currently defined, hence hard to apply in estimates. These can sometimes be clarified through analysis into two or more distinct traits: e.g., different kinds of realism (visual, psychological, social; realism of perspective; of anatomy). Then work A may be judged higher in one kind of realism, B in another.

f. *Use of standard examples for more definite comparison.* Vagueness in casual conversation as to what constitutes "very," "moderately," or "slightly": e.g., as to a crowded street; a heavy snow. Reference to vague standards based on past experience. Slight increase in definiteness through comparison to familiar examples: e.g., "as heavy as the blizzard of 1888." Still more definite if in terms of standard units such as inches. Use of familiar, accessible *works of art* for comparison: e.g., Chartres Cathedral, Hamlet, Beethoven's 5th, Mona Lisa. But form-traits, even of these, not generally agreed upon. Also, each is different in different parts. Need of thorough analysis and discussion of these, to serve as standards. Use of individual *artists* for comparison: e.g., more or less than in Mozart, Whitman, Renoir. This often involves dubious generalization on individual styles.

g. *Antithetical examples; opposite poles in a specified respect:* e.g., Byzantine and late Renaissance, as to emphasis on deep space in pictures. Difficulty of finding absolute extremes in art. Moderate degrees more common. Possibility of constructing artificial examples to illustrate various extremes and degrees, without any necessary claim to artistic merit. Opposite examples help in grading in such terms as: completely, highly, moderately, slightly, not at all.

h. *Standard units* produced by regularly subdividing interval between two arbitrarily chosen extremes; e.g., between freezing and boiling points of water; divided arbitrarily into 100°, to make Centigrade thermometer. Extremes do not necessarily involve

completeness or total lack. Rough approximations are frequently used in history and criticism of art: e.g., "halfway between Duccio and Raphael as to development of perspective." Possibility of refining such judgments through recognition of opposite and intermediate types in certain respects. Exactness usually impossible.

6. *Quantitative analysis of aesthetic form.* (*Summary*).

a. Quantitative analysis of a work of art or a style consists in the attempt to describe it in fairly definite quantitative terms; to observe and describe its traits and their interrelations, and the extent to which certain traits exist therein, in terms of number, amount, magnitude, frequency, size, intensity, duration, proportion, etc.

b. *Rough quantitative estimate:* when definite numerical measures are not attempted, but descriptions are made in vague quantitative terms such as: completely, extremely, highly, moderately, slightly, more than, or less than. Numerical terms such as half, twice as much, first or second stage or degree, may be used in rough estimates and comparisons, without attempt at exact measurement.

c. *Numerical or mathematical analysis* involves measurement or estimate in terms of precisely and objectively defined standard units. These may be units developed in some other field, such as millimeters, seconds, candle powers, decibels, etc., or units devised with special reference to art. Numerical measurement is not necessarily correct or significant. Units and devices for measuring may be incorrectly or misleadingly applied. It is not necessarily exact or precise. Numerical terms can be used for approximate estimates, as in guessing at actual amounts. Where exact measurement is impossible because of extreme complexity and variability, controlled mathematical estimates or approximations can be made, as in statistical correlations.

d. Description of a work of art or a style can involve any or all these types of quantitative analysis. Certain parts or factors in the form may be capable of exact measurement, others not.

7. *Applications and uses.*

a. Quantitative measures, or careful estimates, can help toward *more exact definitions of styles and descriptions of particular works of art,* when needed. It has been noted in previous chapters

that descriptions often have to be in terms of more and less; high, low, or medium degree, since many works and styles may possess some of the traits in question; e.g., most visual styles contain some curves, but Louis XV is extremely curvilinear as a rule. Some Louis XV pieces are a little less so than others. How much?

b. More exact descriptions of *trends in style* and hence in taste, culture-patterns, etc. Increases in certain traits, decreases in others. Possible approach to numerical graphs, as for prices.

c. Such morphological studies can be combined with other data for *causal influences.* Correlation of style-trends with other variables: in cultural history, economic and social conditions; in the life of an individual artist; e.g., trends in an artist's style as related to increasing prosperity, illness, etc. Children's drawing: increasing visual realism in relation to maturation; correlation of stages with age levels.

d. *Prediction of future trends* in style, taste, demand, etc. More accurate when based on quantitative studies, as in economics. For use in commerce; in social control; in education (e.g., to prepare students for successful meeting of future demands). Such prediction requires study of psychological and social factors, in addition to morphological. As in actuarial science, prediction of general future trends, averages, percentages, etc., can often be more accurate than prediction in regard to a particular case.

e. Uses in *art production.* These differ greatly, in different arts, styles, and types of individual artist. Quantitative measurements, and control of production in terms of them, have long been used in certain *arts:* architecture, furniture, industrial arts, textiles, etc. Less so in painting, drawing, sculpture, literature, music. Used in all arts in certain *periods* and *styles.* Esp. in geometric and classical periods; romanticism avoids them as chilling to free inspiration. Used by planful, rationalistic types of artist more than by emotional, impulsive. Examples: use of Hambidge's dynamic symmetry; of Schillinger's methods of musical composition. Systematic variation and combination of components, series, etc.

f. Use in *evaluative criticism* of art. Much artistic evaluation is expressed in terms of "too much," "not enough," or "just enough," etc. Also in terms such as "balance," "economy," which have quantitative implications. To refine such judgments, one

should be able to say, more exactly, how much there actually is of the trait in question; how much there should be; how much one wants.

g. *Psychological, therapeutic, and educational applications,* e.g., in the studies of the effects of certain types or styles of art on certain types of person. Such effects may also be measurable, and correlated with measurements of art works used: e.g., how much suggestion of fear and evil is desirable in stories for children? How much jazz rhythm will make patients cheerful but not nervous?

h. *Tests of creative talent, aptitude, achievement, maturity,* etc. To measure these, one often needs to use the individual's art products as data. A child's drawings, stories, poems, songs, block arrangements. Degree of realism in perspective or anatomy. Correlation with associated factors.

i. *Tests of ability to perceive, analyze, and describe form;* to recognize types of form. In so far as works of art can be objectively described, classified, or measured, one can also investigate people's ability to do so: to recognize form-traits, to apply descriptive terms and classifications in accord with stated definitions. Uses in teaching "appreciation" of visual art, music, literature, etc.

M. Causal problems in the investigation of styles; theories concerning the determining factors in stylistic evolution. The relation of styles to other factors in cultural history. *General problems* and theories regarding causation of style-trends. Supposed "principles" of art history and cultural evolution.

1. Such questions and answers are not integral parts of aesthetic morphology or style analysis. Frequent confusion: e.g., resemblances between an earlier and later style described as "influences" of one on the other, without recognition of causal assumptions involved.

2. Divine inspiration. Stages in development of cosmic mind or will, etc. Transcendental theories of the "spirit of the age" as expressed in styles.

3. Individual artistic genius as spontaneous, inexplicable, uninfluenced, obeying own laws.

4. Evolutionary viewpoints; question of analogy of biological species with artistic styles and other cultural trait-complexes. Differences between styles and biological species: e.g., all cultural traits are acquired and can be transmitted. Resemblances; descent with adaptive modification in the realm of art history.

5. Heredity *vs.* environment as main determining factor in art history. Racial and national theories of the genesis of styles; inner biological determination (hereditary). Geographic, climatic theories (environmental).

6. Diffusionism *vs.* parallelism. Theory that culture has originated in one or a few creative sources, and spread to others. Tendency to explain styles as due to imitation of similar, earlier styles. Other styles as "influences." Theory that analogous cultural traits develop independently in remote times and places, as result of similar inner drives, outer conditions, or both. (Hereditary or environmental). Tendency to explain many similarities in style on other grounds than direct influence and imitation.

7. To what extent do art styles result from and "express" the general social and cultural pattern of the age and group? To what extent are they a causal factor, influencing the latter? To what extent are certain recurrent types of styles correlated with certain stages in social evolution, such as tribal, urban, etc., and explainable accordingly?

8. Economic determinism; Marxian "materialistic" interpretation of history. Art styles as expressing class ideologies, and as instruments in class struggle. Aristocratic, bourgeois, proletarian, revolutionary art; for and against the status quo.

9. Style as the expression of an underlying world view or "spirit of the age"; of a distinctive mental and emotional attitude. Much dubious speculation along this line. Need of objective comparison between art styles and other cultural manifestations: e.g., possible correlation with trends in philosophy, religion, science, government, invention, exploration, social institutions, etc. Unprejudiced morphological descriptions of styles themselves are required for such wider generalizations.

10. Correlations between styles and social attitudes, cultural settings, etc., should be as specific as possible. Not merely the

general "spirit" of the whole age, but specific attitudes, motivations, assumptions, interests, etc., of a particular locality, social class, or other group at a certain time.

11. *Special problems of causal explanation.* On each of these, note how necessary methods differ from those of pure stylistic and morphological analysis. Need of additional information and evidence. Frequent confusion with stylistic analysis. Need of systematic co-operation between aesthetics and art history.

a. Why a particular historic style, such as Rococo, developed when and where it did. Causes of its extension, duration, decline, etc.

b. Particular resemblances between styles: e.g., European Gothic and "Buddhist Gothic." Recurrences of abstract types. Why?

c. Differences between neighboring styles; causes of divergence; e.g., between German, French, Italian, and Spanish Gothic.

d. Style-trends; why a particular change, then and there?

e. Prediction of future style-trends; forecasting; prolonging a present trend into the future. For commercial and theoretical reasons. Involves causal problems.

f. Individual artists' styles. States or periods in one artist's style; e.g., Picasso's Blue Period. Their causation, as due in part to prior artistic influences; to inborn personality, environment other than art, etc. Problems of the biographer of an artist. Estimation of the artist's originality or derivativeness in relation to predecessors and contemporaries; his influence on other artists.

g. Particular works of art as examples of a style or styles, or as nonconforming to current styles. Why produced in this way?

h. Associated problems of attribution, authenticity, authorship, provenance. Of originality or derivativeness in relation to other works of art. Types of evidence used. Aesthetics relies on art history for information on date, place, and authorship of works of art. Such facts not ascertainable by form analysis alone, but require supplementary information: e.g., from contemporary documents, geological, chemical and X-ray studies. Without this, aesthetics cannot generalize on historic or individual styles, trends, developments, etc. Historians and art experts, however, often decide on attribution of a piece, largely or wholly because of its style; i.e., it looks like the work of a certain period or artist.

Reasoning in a circle; question of correctness of assumptions regarding styles. Vague dogmatism of much "expertizing." Stylistic traits as distinct from nonstylistic attribution-marks: e.g., hallmarks, signatures, handwriting, type of paper, microscopic peculiarities of brushstroke.

N. Relations between styles; classification and history.

1. Need in aesthetics and art history for logical, significant, convenient methods of grouping styles for study and reference. For organizing histories and theoretical surveys of styles.

2. Thorough description of any particular style requires account of its relation to others; overlappings and inclusions; borderline and intermediate styles and trends, etc. Definition of a style requires reference to its *genus* (larger class or style to which it belongs); its *differentiae* (ways it differs from others within that genus); examples of it; e.g., "the style of Rubens is Baroque; it differs from other Baroque styles in the following ways. . . . It is illustrated in the following paintings, with the following traits . . . ." Such definition involves classification.

3. Styles and organic *species*. Biological methods of nomenclature and classification. Taxonomy as a branch of biology; its methods. Possible applications in aesthetics.

4. Classification of styles on basis of art or medium; on basis of technique or mode of production (e.g., hand or machine). Limitations.

5. Classification on basis of *form-traits emphasized*. Grouping of *similar* styles regardless of historic origin; e.g., styles emphasizing clear outlines of line and mass (Wölfflin, "linear"); styles emphasizing blurred, flowing color, light, atmosphere, texture (Wölfflin, "painterly"). Ornate and plain, severe styles. Styles with functional decoration only, or with nonfunctional. Simple and complex; geometric and biomorphic, naturalistic. Each style involves emphasis on several different traits.

a. Aids systematic description of inclusions, overlappings, exclusions, and oppositions or antitheses among styles.

b. Certain kinds of trait and similarity can be selected as fundamental for classification. See Linnaeus' use of stamens and pistils.

Presence or absence of spinal cord in animals. Problem of what aesthetic traits are most fundamental in distinguishing styles. Which ones imply and indicate many other connected traits; carry others with them.

c. Practical uses: e.g., in interior design, grouping examples of different arts which will harmonize through similarity, regardless of period. Modern eclectic ensembles; e.g., African Negro and Cubist.

6. Classification on *historical basis;* provenance; time and place of origin.

a. Grouping styles as neighboring in history; chronologically, geographically; ethnically.

b. Two-dimensional charts and tables; e.g., Cox's in *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* "Periods of Art." Simultaneous indication of time axis and spatial-ethnic division.

c. Books and articles on art history usually choose one basis as primary, if covering extensive area of space and time. Primarily chronological, with geographic subdivisions. Primarily geographic, with chronological subdivisions. Varying, shifting combinations.

d. Arrangement of styles on above historical frameworks, pointing out distribution of each; its extension in various ways. Sequences of styles and trends. Causal interpretations are usually desired.

VII

FORM AND VALUE IN THE ARTS: A FUNCTIONAL APPROACH*

1. Aesthetic and other functions of the arts

The word "art" and its equivalents in other languages have had many meanings in the last twenty-five hundred years. The original Greek meaning, "useful skill," was very broad, covering such utilitarian "arts" as war, medicine, mining, and agriculture. By the eighteenth century, the conception had arisen of "fine arts" (also called "polite" or "elegant" arts) as concerned primarily with the production of beauty or aesthetic pleasure. The others, concerned more with providing basic necessities and comforts, came to be known as "useful," "practical," or "industrial" arts.

These terms are still sometimes employed, as in speaking of "medical arts." But on the whole the tendency has been to drop the word "art" as applied to wholly or mainly utilitarian skills, and to call them instead "applied sciences," "technics," "engineering," or "industrial technology." This tends to restrict the word "art" to skills directly concerned with aesthetic aims and values. However, it is recognized that no sharp line can be drawn between "aesthetic" and "useful" skills or their products. Many arts commonly classed as "fine" or "aesthetic," such as architecture and furniture designing, are also concerned with utility. Painting and music are often adapted to practical ends, as in advertising and propaganda. Many skills regarded as primarily utilitarian, such as the making of tools, machines, and weapons, are sometimes devoted in part to aesthetic aims—to making the product visually attractive. A branch of a large industry may thus be classed as an art. For example, "decorative ironwork," as in ornamental gates and balconies, is an art and also a branch of the iron industry, which is predominantly utilitarian. Many other kinds of iron work, such as the manufacture of iron pipes to be placed underground, are not arts in the present sense.

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Art still coincides to some extent with utilitarian technology, in spite of the modern trend toward differentiating the two. This is true not only where artist and engineer intentionally co-operate to make a utensil or a piece of furniture both beautiful and useful; it occurs also where purely utilitarian aims incidentally produce forms which are later felt as beautiful, and imitated for that purpose. Often an aesthetic aim is indicated in the work of art itself, as by features which seem to have no other function than to please in this way. If a tool, utensil, weapon, house, or garment is finished with ornamental details that serve no strictly utilitarian function, the aesthetic aim is evident and the product is classed as a work of art. But the reverse is not necessarily true. Though lacking in added ornamentation, it may still be considered a work of art and a thing of beauty, because of its plain, "functional" design. A severely utilitarian tool is usually preferred by contemporary taste to an ornate one which was made to be beautiful. But the making of such tools is not usually considered an art unless it is practiced with a consciously aesthetic aim and attention to visible appearance.

Literature as an art overlaps many other kinds of verbal composition, both oral and written. The line is hard to draw between literary writing and scientific, journalistic, religious, or scholarly writing, especially in essays and treatises. Prose rhythm and euphony, freshness and vividness of metaphor and fantasy, over and above the requirements of strictly practical or intellectual functions, tend to invite aesthetic enjoyment. When a piece of literature is obviously in verse form or tells an entertaining story, there is less doubt about its intended aesthetic function.

Some skills are more strongly and commonly aesthetic in aim and function than others: poetry, music, and painting are more so than machine design. But this does not imply that the aesthetic qualities of an automobile are necessarily inferior to those of a painting or poem, or that industrial design on the whole is less worthy of respect because of its greater concern with utilitarian functioning. That belief passed away with the age of aristocracy and with the general prejudice against useful, manual work as unfit for a lady or gentleman. The realm of art is now understood as including certain branches of a great many different skills and industries as widely separated as carpentry, city planning, horticulture, animal-breeding,

cosmetics, and even plastic surgery, where satisfactory visual appearance or "eye appeal" is at least one of the principal aims; also those where satisfactory auditory effects are sought, as in music and speech. Cookery and perfume, appealing aesthetically to the lower senses, are now usually classed as arts in spite of the psychological limitations of these senses in perceiving complex form.

It is no longer possible to restrict the realm of art to five, seven, or any short list of arts. Not only painting, sculpture, architecture, music, poetry, dance, and theater must be included, but scores of others including film and television. If our view extends to other ages and cultures, we must include as arts tattooing, featherwork, and many other skills which are absent or low in status in our own. Since the term "art" alone has come to imply an aesthetic aim or function, the prefix "fine" is no longer required to distinguish the aesthetic arts from other skills.

Among the many current definitions of "art," some are strongly evaluative, implying praise or merit. To be a work of art by this definition, a thing must be actually beautiful, aesthetically pleasing, or high in value.

The idea of beauty is somewhat less used today in deciding what is to be classed as art, partly because of the difficulty of agreeing on what is beautiful. The word "art" is increasingly used in a neutral, nonevaluative sense, in which all oil paintings, all poems and symphonies are broadly classed as "works of art," regardless of their individual merit or lack of merit. Such a neutral conception of art is useful in scientific discussion. An anthropologist can refer to the "arts" of a primitive people—their pottery, wood carvings, basketry, etc.—without having to show that they are beautiful by our standards. A psychologist can speak of "children's art," of the art of the blind or that of insane patients, as something to be studied scientifically. Such usage facilitates scientific study by allowing us to speak of "art" objectively as a name for certain types of cultural phenomena, under which many analogous skills and products of different cultures can be grouped for comparison.

Using "art" in a nonevaluative sense does not prevent one from evaluating works of art, or imply that one regards them all as equally good. A man is called an "artist" simply because he practices a certain kind of occupation; he can be a bad artist as someone else might

be a bad doctor or lawyer. We may agree that his products are "works of art" in the broad sense, and then go on to say that by our standards they are extremely ugly, weak, imitative, or harmful.

The same way of thinking applies to each particular art. In the old sense, nothing was recognized as "literature" unless it was rated as high in aesthetic value. About a popular tune, the lover of classical music would say, "It's not real music." In the more objective sense all novels, plays, and poems are literature; all songs and piano sonatas are music; but we are free to call some of them good literature, good music, or bad.

Use or function, rather than success or value, thus provides the main criterion for classing a thing as a work of art. Differences among styles and particular works of art, varieties of form and technique, can be studied and in part explained by reference to the functions, aesthetic and other, for which they are used or intended.

The common antithesis between "functional" and "aesthetic," the "useful" and the "beautiful" or "decorative" aspects of art, is misleading. It obscures the important fact that aesthetic functions are also "functional" and "useful" in their own way. There are psychic functions and means for them, as well as physical and overt ones. Perceiving, desiring, thinking, and emotion are, like breathing and digesting, functions or basic activities of the human organism. The uses of a house or garment can include looking well, arousing pleased admiration in the spectator, as well as giving warmth and protection to the owner. Classical columns in a bank or government building may be nonfunctional in the engineering sense, yet psychically functional in conveying desired suggestions of secure, respectable conservatism. Heraldic art in the Middle Ages had the social function of indicating the owner's feudal rank, family, prestige, and privileges. A large and showy automobile or a mink coat may convey desired suggestions of wealth and status today. These are actual, operative functions of art, whether one approves of them or not. The aesthetic functions of art can be distinguished in theory from its utilitarian, moral, patriotic, educational, therapeutic, and other functions, although in practice they are often closely merged. But all are functions in the sense of regular uses or activities. Often the aesthetic functions are a necessary means to the others. A story is likely to be more effective in conveying the information or moral

lesson desired by teachers if it can hold a child's attentive interest and arouse in him a favorable attitude toward the ideas conveyed.

It is narrow-minded to conceive of "functionalism" in architecture and other useful arts as a severe, exclusive devotion to utilitarian ends and means; as a deliberate neglect of aesthetic and decorative values, or an assumption that these can be automatically achieved merely by stressing, in the object's appearance, its basic utilitarian structure. In practice, this has led to some good results, as in clearing away superfluous ornament. But as a general principle it is exaggerated. A broad and thorough functionalism in art will consider aesthetic, psychological, sociological, and other functions in their own right. It will ask how they can all be best attained in each particular case, in relation to each other, and the purpose of the whole. There may be some occasions when aesthetic ends seem most important and best attained by types of form other than the severely utilitarian.

The functional or technical conception of art is quite consistent with the other common conception of art as expression and communication, a view derived largely from Tolstoy's *What is Art?* One of the chief ways in which an artist arouses satisfactory aesthetic experience in others is to provide symbolic forms—literary, pictorial, or otherwise—in which he has expressed some of his own past emotional and other experiences, real or imaginary, and those of his cultural group. He expresses and communicates through the power of certain sensory images to convey emotive meanings to observers as a result of social usage. The artist may have little conscious interest in pleasing the public, or even try to shock and offend them; he may be mainly interested in his own emotions and the task of expressing them. It is a function of art to help the artist to express himself; perhaps to understand himself, overcome inner conflicts and frustrations, realize his potentialities, and achieve a good life. This is one reason for encouraging children in creative work.

The public is little interested, however, unless the adult artist has something to express and communicate which seems worth while from an observer's point of view. It may enjoy the work of an artist who tried to shock and irritate even more than that of one who tried to please. From the social and historical standpoint, the reason why humanity patronizes the arts and pays the artist is because it finds

his products valuable in aesthetic and other ways; not in order to give him the privilege of expressing himself. The social effects of art are more important in determining its nature and function than are the needs of individual artists. On the whole, artists have to be responsive to the needs and tastes of some public or patron, and to adapt their products accordingly. Even the wealthy, independent artist usually enjoys the praise of friends and critics.

In many realms of science, things are classed and described according to their characteristic function or activity, their regular contribution to a joint result or service, the end to which they are adapted (whether the adaptation is successful or not). The main function of a bird's wings is to help it fly, even though some wings are too weak or maladapted to do so. A primitive flying-machine like that of Leonardo da Vinci, which did not and probably could not fly, is still called a flying-machine because of its intended function and partial fitness. It must have some rudiments of actual, objective structure and adaptation; a purely subjective dream of a flying-machine is not a work of art, nor is a stick which a child "makes believe" is an airplane. But the structure can be very crude and the adaptation ineffective. In primitive art, we refer to a rain dance or a charm against evil spirits, regardless of our disbelief in its efficacy. A very young child's drawing, in which he tries to represent a man, will be classed as a "drawing of a man" and an example of "children's art," in spite of its crudity and lack of resemblance. Very little skill is implied by "art" in this sense.

Use of any human product or activity as an object of aesthetic enjoyment, by any observer, is a step toward making it a work of art for him, whatever others may think of its merits. If someone admires a cogwheel, a spring, or some other machine part for its visible form and places it on his mantel shelf to be observed aesthetically, it operates as a work of art for him and perhaps for his friends. A scientific diagram or three-dimensional model made to illustrate a mathematical concept may appeal to some art lover as beautiful. He may place one in his room in such a way as to suggest that it be viewed aesthetically rather than scientifically. As such, it begins taking on the function of a work of art. But the making of such forms is not socially recognized as an art until it is practiced persistently for aesthetic reasons, as in abstract sculpture. An artifact or

activity is not usually classed as a work of art unless it belongs to a type which is frequently so used and consciously produced for that purpose.

In the case of a particular work of art, it is often impossible to know what the artist's conscious aim or intention may have been. This is true, of course, of most ancient and primitive work, whose makers are unknown. An individual painter, for his own reasons, may try to make a picture as ugly and displeasing as possible. An artist's conscious aims are not always the same as his basic motives. But in the general conception of art it is unnecessary, even if it were possible, to consider individual intentions. That would introduce many complications which can better be explored in aesthetic psychology. The basic distinction here is a social, cultural one. It is an undisputed fact of history that painting, sculpture, music, poetry, dancing, and many other skills classed as "arts" have commonly been produced and used for giving aesthetic satisfaction, along with various other ends and functions.

A regular, established social function is different from an occasional or accidental use. An oil painting may be used to patch a hole in a roof, but that is not its regular function. The occasional use of some bizarre device by a single individual, to produce an effect he considers beautiful, does not constitute such methods as an established art. Some amount of recurrence and persistence in social activities and attitudes is required. Tattooing is an art, not because one can prove it beautiful, but because it has been practiced and regarded aesthetically by fairly large social groups over long periods of time—e.g., by the Maori of New Zealand. It is fairly distinct from other arts in that it has developed its own materials, technics, forms, meanings, and social functions. In our culture the film has gradually become an art, as distinct from stage drama; radio and television are on the way to becoming distinct arts.

There is no sharp line between artistic and nonartistic skills and products, but much overlapping and constant change as new technics and media develop, and as old ones take on different functions in a changing world. A work of art can be, at the same time, a work of science, of philosophy, of religious ritual, or of industrial engineering. These are all flexible and somewhat arbitrary, man-made categories, corresponding to no fixed boundaries in the nature of

things; they are ways of marking off different areas in human culture, as seen from different points of view, for study and management. To separate them too sharply in theory is to falsify their nature.

The power of art to stimulate satisfactory aesthetic experience in and through direct perception is its most distinctive, persistent function. This function is shared by art with certain aspects of nature, but (by definition) not with any other human skill or product. To attempt such a function is to assume the role of art, whether successfully or not. As we have seen, this function is not the only one exercised by art, and is not always considered its most important one. In a particular case the utilitarian functions of a coat or house, the moral or patriotic values of a picture, the educational value of a historical novel, the curative effects of music may be regarded as far more urgent than its beauty or aesthetic appeal. Such functions cannot truthfully be ranked in any absolute hierarchy of value, as in saying that "art for art's sake" or "art for aesthetic value" is always more important than other ends, or less so.

2. *Works of art as aesthetic stimuli and guides*

Many kinds of "work" are involved in the production and use of art. Innumerable activities, mental and bodily, go into the conceiving, designing, planning, executing, and performing of art. Still others go into the use, enjoyment, evaluation, and study of art by consumer, scholar, critic, and teacher. These are all important phenomena for aesthetics to examine.

In aesthetic morphology, we are concerned mainly with the products of art. A "work of art," in this connection, means the performance or product, the *oeuvre* or *opus,* rather than the labor or *travail* of preparing, observing, or using it. Morphology specializes in a descriptive, comparative analysis of works of art, as to their selection and arrangement of materials. It emphasizes the way in which they appear to direct inspection rather than a far-reaching study of their genesis and use. But their nature as products cannot be fully understood apart from their cultural environments, as static forms on printed pages or within glass cases, like butterflies on pins. They must be described as instruments or attempted instruments for achieving certain results under certain conditions.

Some of the products of art are physical objects or arrangements

of material things, such as buildings, statues, paintings, printed words or musical notes on paper. Others are performances, temporal sequences of actions, as in dancing, singing, acting on a stage, reciting poetry, or playing symphonies. A static, finished product such as a porcelain vase is performed or executed once by its maker; thereafter it can serve automatically as a stimulus to visual perception whenever the light falls upon it and is reflected to the eyes of an observer. A symphony has to be reactivated or performed again and again in order to be audibly perceptible. So does a stage play. Both are performed, under civilized conditions, with the aid of printed scores or texts which act as sets of directions to the performer. Such a set of directions is itself regarded as a work of art with a form of its own, different from that of any single performance. Both it and the performance are instrumental to aesthetic experience. Silent reading of literature is itself a kind of imaginary performance; trained musicians can practice it even in reading a musical score.

All these kinds of art work have *form* in the sense of *mode of arrangement* of materials, parts, or qualities, whatever these may be. "Artistic form," in this nonevaluative sense, is simply the form of a work of art, just as "plant form" is the form of a plant. It is not necessarily beautiful, valuable, or highly unified and organized. A cloud or a wave has form. It may present aesthetic form to an observer; but as a physical event or configuration its form is natural rather than artistic. A painting of it has artistic form as well as aesthetic form. The term "aesthetic form" is confusingly employed in several senses, of which one corresponds to "biological" or "botanical" form—i.e., the types of form studied by aesthetics.

As a set of sensory stimuli, a printed score of music is visible and spatial, seen in two dimensions on the page, while the performance is mainly audible and temporal. Every performance is a little different from every other, even of the same work by the same performer. The set of directions usually leaves some aspects of the work unspecified. Some kinds of performance are comparatively automatic, uniform, and mechanical, as in showing a motion picture film or playing a phonograph record. At most, one has to adjust a few controls for correct operation, and keep the machine in order. Here the artistic skill involved is mostly in the initial manufacture of the device which automatically repeats the performance, and that phase is of most concern to aesthetics.

Even where a product is apparently finished, once and for all, it may still be altered in the course of later use or performance. Poems, plays, and musical scores are often revised by later editors, actors, and musicians; paintings and buildings are damaged and repaired. Even where the physical objects remain almost unchanged, they are differently understood by successive generations; the same words or other symbols take on different meanings. Thus, again, the work of art as finished product is not completely separable from the processes of production, reproduction, and performance. Morphology can most easily observe its relatively fixed, enduring forms: the finished objects and the sets of direction for performance.

From a functional standpoint, a *work of art is a product of human skill which is intended or used as a stimulus and guide to satisfactory aesthetic experience, often along with other ends or functions; any example of a type of product commonly so used or intended. Works of art include (a) static and moving objects such as pictures and fountains, (b) performances or activities such as dances and operas, and (c) guides or sets of directions for such performances, as in dramatic texts and musical scores. Most works of art are directed primarily to the sight or hearing of observers; some to a lower sense, and some to two or more senses. The stimuli thus presented to sense perception are usually endowed by cultural usage with power to suggest more or less specific meanings, sense images, concepts, thoughts, desires, and emotions; hence with power to record and communicate varied experiences from one individual or group to others, and to stimulate diversified, far-reaching apperceptive, affective, and other responses in a suitably trained and compliant observer.*

The distinctive function of a work of art (though seldom the only one) is thus to act as a connected group or sequence of sensory stimuli in such a way as to stimulate and guide other constituent processes in a complex, diversified, satisfactory aesthetic response or experience. This commonly intended function helps to determine the form of the work of art. An understanding of the functions helps to explain its form and cultural significance.

As a stimulus, a work of art is usually more than a single, brief event, such as a flash of light or the stroke of a bell, which might start a train of thought or action but not keep on directing it. The words of a play or novel, the notes of music, the details of a picture

usually offer an organized system of cues or specific stimuli capable of guiding the perception, thought, feeling, and sometimes the overt action of a sensitive, willing, suitably trained observer through a considerable period of time.

To describe the process roughly in terms of "stimulus and response" does not imply all the psychological assumptions, many of them erroneous or oversimplified, with which these terms have in the past been connected. It is possible also to use the word "association" without accepting the atomistic theories of eighteenth-century associationism. In the psychology of art we are concerned throughout with complex, total configurations in behavior and experience, and also with their objects. In mentioning the "stimulus" first, we do not imply that it necessarily initiates the series of events which constitutes the aesthetic experience, or that the responding person is merely passive and reactive. A man may be suddenly and unintentionally struck by waves of light from a picture or waves of sound from a nearby orchestra, or he may go out and look actively for a certain kind of object with which to stimulate and guide his perception and fantasy. He may be comparatively passive and compliant toward it, or may observe it in some active, selective way, noticing only certain things which especially interest him at the moment.

3. The functional analysis of works of art

What is meant by "function" and "functional"? How are they related to ends, means, and values? According to Webster's *New International Dictionary,* a *function* is "The natural and proper action of anything; special activity; office, duty, calling, operation, or the like." After this definition, J. Martineau is quoted with a sentence which refers to art's aesthetic functioning: "It is a function of both poetry and religion to rebaptize us . . . in floods of wonder." *Functional,* according to Webster, means "Performing or serving a function, as a useful purpose or special activity; designed, developed, considered, etc., with reference to a function or to functioning; as a functional conception of the mental life; a functional plan, style."

A full account of aesthetic functioning would have to include many types of experience besides that of wonder, as produced by works of art. It would distinguish between the functions of poetry and religion, which overlap but are not identical. It would dis-

tinguish many varieties of aesthetic response: some as sought or frequently aroused by certain types of art, others correlated rather with certain types of personality and culture-pattern.

The total aesthetic response to a work of art which is felt by the observer is loosely described as the "effect" of that work upon him. But it is never the effect of that one cause alone. Many factors co-operate to produce this joint result: his basic personality and present mood, the circumstances under which he perceives the object, in addition to the nature of the work of art. The immediate "effect" helps lead to others along various lines. The same is true of such a joint, physiological result as nutrition or poisoning. It is caused not only by the substance eaten, but by contributing factors in the organism, healthy or unhealthy, which help to make one substance act upon it as food, another as poison. Though not the only cause, food has a regular, useful function in co-operating with organic and environmental factors to produce the total, joint effect of continued, healthy life. Art can in some ways be regarded as a psychic, mental, spiritual food; but one man's food may be another man's (or child's) poison, or at least rather indigestible.

The definitions just quoted of "function" and "functional" omit one essential connotation: that of co-operating in a joint activity, usually one involving some specialization of parts and differentiation of activities. The wing of a bird is functional in co-operating with other parts and processes toward the survival of the individual and species. It is functionally related to the bird's lightness of bony structure, to its diet and habitat, to its nesting and migratory instincts. In a house, the kitchen and bedrooms, doors and windows, stoves and faucets are functional in contributing regular, specialized services to the total operation of the house as a "machine for living." ("Machine," in this sense, does not have to imply a rigid, cold, or uncongenial mechanism. If it is, it is a bad machine for the purpose.) A house has a larger function also, of contributing to good social living in the community and nation.

Art is functional in performing a desired service which is distinctive and somewhat specialized; one which differs from that of other main branches of civilization, such as science, religion, commerce, and industry. It co-operates with these and others in the total activity of civilized society. Works of art and experiences of them play a regular, valuable part in the lives of broadly educated persons. They

co-operate with other means and types of experience toward the inclusive aim of a good life: with work and play, love, friendship, family life, and citizenship. Their forms and functions, ideally and actually, will vary according to the complex of activities and means to them within which they are called upon to operate.

The term "function" is in some ways more precise and uncontroversial than "value" for describing the operation of a work of art within a particular context of behavior and experience. "Value" suggests a static quality or relationship, and raises endless questions as to whether the effects are really good or bad, right or wrong, to what extent and in what ways. Such deeper questions must be thoroughly examined in aesthetic axiology, but not in morphology. "Function" implies a more limited, relative kind of use or value toward a specific result such as biological survival, tentatively assumed to be good on the whole or within a certain realm of discussion. In biology, anything is taken to be good, valuable, or functional for an individual or species which helps it to survive. An organ or an instinct can thus have "survival value." It may be good for one species and bad for others. Within this context, one does not have to argue whether survival is always a blessing. In medical ethics, it is sometimes an urgent question. Anything whose effects are more injurious than helpful to physical life, as the human appendix seems to be, is nonfunctional from a biological standpoint. Religious celibacy and extreme asceticism are thus biologically nonfunctional, except as preventing surplus population; so are works of art which encourage such practices.

Evaluation on a basis of civilized moral and aesthetic standards is enormously more complex and controversial, partly because we try to appraise things in so many different ways at once, and to arrive at final, complete evaluations of their total, ultimate worth. We thus neglect the more limited, relative types of evaluation in which some empirical study, testing, and generalization as to causal relations is possible. Even on the basis of a utilitarian code, in which effects are held to determine values, the effects of a work of art appear so infinitely ramifying, so debatable as to which are better or worse from different standpoints, that one tends to give up in despair. Philosophers need not abandon this quest for deep and broad evaluations; but in special fields it is useful to divide the problem.

In the morphology of art we can arbitrarily limit the context, the

range of effects and consequences to be taken into account. We can examine the operation of a work of art in certain respects only; e.g., as a stimulus and guide to aesthetic experience, or to some particular phase of it such as the perception of visual form. Such a study would not entitle one to conclude that the work of art was beautiful, good, or valuable in general. But it might give grounds for saying that the object tended to produce a certain effect on certain types of person under specified conditions. People who desire and seek that effect would interpret this in terms of value: that object A is "good" for that purpose, or has that value. But it is less confusing to avoid evaluative terms in morphological analysis, because of their controversial associations.

One can thus describe the form of a pistol in limited, functional terms, as involving co-operation among several parts. Each of these has its use in relation to the rest and to the final end or function of the whole, which is to shoot a bullet hard and straight, with safety to the shooter. One need not ask, within the scope of form-analysis, whether it is really a good thing to have pistols and shoot them, or whether they are sometimes used for evil purposes.

Likewise, one can describe the aesthetic function of a part or device in a work of art—let us say the graveyard jesting in *Hamlet*—as one of comic relief and relaxing emotional tension through semi-humorous philosophizing. One does not have to argue, in doing so, that the result is really good or beautiful, morally or aesthetically valuable. One can point out, in music, that a certain modulation is made as a step toward gradual return to the tonic key, and in order to suggest a mood of increasing calm and repose. A certain contrast of dark and light in a painting helps to make a certain object seem farther back in space; it also fits in with other dark and light spots in a pattern. Often, in a tightly organized form, each detail has many different functions which it carries out at once, each in relation to a different set of co-operating factors in the whole. Different ones are noticed by different critics, each with a special interest in mind.

In mechanical forms such as the automobile, the total end or function is usually clearer than it is in the fine arts. Their development is a long history of removing "bugs" or inefficient, nonfunctional parts which obstruct others or break down in operation; of substituting others which co-operate more smoothly and economi-

cally in the total process. But needs and uses change and people disagree about them. Is speed, safety, comfort, appearance, or economy of mileage most important? No one can decide conclusively, and a compromise is reached—a different one each year, as consumer reaction is expressed. Yet some uncertainty about requirements does not prevent a fairly precise, experimental analysis of different kinds of automobile, as forms adapted to various utilitarian and aesthetic needs. The functional "program" of a modern automobile or hotel building is multivalent, complex, and versatile. It must serve many related needs under changing conditions. Public wants and tastes change from year to year, and the form at any one time is a partially successful means of satisfying the most urgent of them within limits of expense, legality, and present industrial techniques.

When all details in a work of art co-operate toward a joint effect, each exerts an influence on every other and is affected in return. In a highly organized musical or pictorial composition, every chord or spot of color seems to justify itself as immediately satisfying. It is not a mere means to some other part or to the total effect. Yet its peculiar quality depends to some extent on its formal context in space or time: the rest of the work of art. It helps other details to seem immediately, individually satisfying also; and it helps to build up combined, cumulative effects which have their own value. Unlike most machines and living organisms, however, a work of art is not completely dependent for its aesthetic effect on the unity of the whole. When a man's heart or liver stops working, he dies; when the ignition is cut off, a car stops. But a work of art can often operate to some extent, bit by bit, through the individual power of each detail. Hence the extant fragments of Sappho's verses can be enjoyed in isolation, though surely less than in the original poems. Some long poems are tiresome on the whole but contain striking details which can be detached like jewels and preserved in anthologies. From many operas, only one aria is ever played. Unity is not everything; but when all the parts are individually effective, co-operation can add greatly to their total strength.

Each chord and rest in music, each crescendo and diminuendo, each line and spot of color in a painting, each word and comma in a poem, is supposed to have its function or contribution to the whole. Hence the belief that nothing can be changed in a great work of art without spoiling it. But this is true only in theory, as an ideal of

perfection which is seldom attained and not always attempted. Biographies of artists show that they often keep on altering their works and remain dissatisfied with them. In many noted works of art ineffective, dead, or positively conflicting elements can be found. Homer nods; lesser men alter his works; the Parthenon is demolished. What is left is no perfect unity, but it can still be a powerful aesthetic mechanism.

A work of art differs from ordinary tools and machines in important respects. Neither the artist nor the user, in most cases, tries to think out exactly what aesthetic effect he wishes to achieve. He could not do so with much precision if he wanted to, for psychology, aesthetics, and art criticism are still at a rudimentary stage in distinguishing various kinds of subtle, complex, aesthetic response. Neither terms nor concepts are available for formulating exact aesthetic aims in the way we formulate the purpose of a carpenter's tool or a medicine. Even when the artist tries to tell us what he hopes to achieve, how he wants to interest and reward the observer, he usually fails to do so. His attempts may be wide of the mark and misleading. Many artists are inept at verbal expression and dislike to analyze works of art, especially their own. They have said what they had to say in the work itself and resent attempts to make them explain it otherwise. Verbal explanation and comparison with other works of art often seem to them to belittle and destroy the precious uniqueness of the glorious form to which they have, in some mysterious way, given birth. The creation of a new, original form seems to them worth while in itself. Whether anyone, layman or critic, likes or enjoys it or not is (they say) a matter of supreme indifference. The public, also, is usually content with vague ideas of what a work of art is supposed to do. Publishers, producers, advertisers, critics, and teachers give us rough ideas (not always trustworthy) of the kind of effect we are likely to derive from it; but we are often content with the vaguest of adjectives, such as "funny," "restful," "inspiring," "beautiful," or "thought-provoking."

When the concept of the total end or function of the work is vague and uncertain, it is correspondingly hard to appraise details as contributing or not contributing to that joint result. It is often hard to decide whether an apparently jarring, inconsistent note really obstructs the purpose of the whole, or whether it contributes in a subtle, indirect way to some peculiar aesthetic effect which is not ob-

vious, and which we fail to grasp. This is a common experience with new and unfamiliar types of art. At first, we call them "formless," "confused," "inconsistent," and the like; but as we come to realize what they are trying to do, we often see that they are formed with entire consistency and logical fitness for that specific effect: perhaps to suggest confusion, chaos, madness, conflict, or undisciplined variety. "Do I contradict myself?" asked Walt Whitman. "Very well then, I contradict myself. (I am large, I contain multitudes)."

To give aesthetic enjoyment in general is a function; to give some particular kind may or may not be. An exceptional or novel effect in art, however welcome, is not a function of art in the full sense. It may become so if sought again and again, so as to form a regular operation. Established functions and effective means to them are more evident in established types of art, such as traditional folk songs and dances, church buildings and rituals, than in experimental ones where forms and functions are both in a state of flux and gradual emergence. On the other hand, it can be said that art has a perennial, broadly inclusive function in cultural evolution, along with science and philosophy. It helps man to advance experimentally into new fields: to evolve new forms of thought, behavior and expression.

It is not essential to the concept of aesthetic functioning that the artist should have consciously planned each particular adaptation of means to end. Some artists plan their works rationally; others proceed more by impulse and emotion. Often the artist feels only a vague sense of rightness and achievement when things are one way; the opposite when they are another way. He may plan one product and find himself surprisingly producing another. Subsequent critics and scholars may discern both adaptation and its lack with far more clarity than the artist did; yet they never do so completely, for the ends which are sought in and through art are never fully recognized at the time. Half blindly, but with flashes of prophetic insight, the genuinely creative artist fashions intricate devices for results whose nature he cannot foresee; devices toward which, nevertheless, he feels irresistibly drawn; whose making seems unquestionably worth while, wherever it may lead. In retrospect, historians see his work as part of some long-persistent movement and may reappraise each detail as to its function in advancing or retarding that main trend. Thus the means-end relations which an artist or contemporary critic

sees and admires within a work are often quite different from those admired by posterity. Aims and values, successes and failures are differently construed. The small unity of a single work may be destroyed by some odd, inconsistent note which seems bad at the time. Yet historians may hail it as the first step toward a new style, and as functional within that larger context of art history. Science is gradually learning more about the great variety of forms and functions of art, and hence is more able to recognize different kinds of functional adaptation, both familiar and unfamiliar.

In the consumer of art, as in the producer, conscious understanding and purposeful use are not essential to aesthetic functioning. Those who enjoy or dislike art are seldom if ever fully aware of the effects it is having on them, or of the reasons why they like or dislike it. Many of the persistent functions of art are exercised on and through unconscious mental mechanisms. We are now discovering, by means of depth psychology, some of the ways in which art expresses and dramatizes, in obscure symbolic form, perennial conflicts and repressions which are almost universal in civilized man, yet of which he is only dimly aware. Such art (*Oedipus Rex* and *Hamlet,* for example) has been said to speak from the unconscious of the artist to that of the public. It can help the observer to become more fully conscious of his inner problems, and more able to solve them on a rational level.

The aesthetic effects and functions of a complex, many-sided work of art cannot be reduced to any one quality such as beauty or sublimity, to any one type of experience such as excitement, repose, or pleasure, or even to a more specific concept, such as "purging the emotions through pity and fear." Such terms help a little, but not much, in distinguishing main types of art and of aesthetic effect. They fall far short of describing the peculiar, complex experience aroused by *Hamlet, Tristan,* or Chartres Cathedral.

In the functional analysis of art, as in that of a plant or animal, one must first ask, "How does it work, in relation to the things and events around it? What role does each part and each constituent process play in this operation?" The larger complex within which a jungle animal operates is that of its family, species, and neighboring flora and fauna. Domesticated animals acquire an artificial function in relation to human wants: to give milk, or pull carts. They are bred to improve their fitness for such use: one horse for strength,

another for speed. Cats are used and bred to be beautiful, as well as to catch mice and be household pets. To that extent they are works of art, and their eyes or hair can be appraised as means to an aesthetic, human purpose. This differs from the natural, biological functions which helped their wild ancestors to survive; but it also helps them to survive as a species under human control. Art often helps man to survive, and thus has a biological as well as an aesthetic function. At other times it tends to weaken him through luxury and overrefinement.

The larger complex within which any work of art operates is that of human needs, desires, and attempts to satisfy them. Some of these are aesthetic, and art is an attempted means of satisfying them. There is nothing essentially incomprehensible or inaccessible to science about aesthetic needs or the ways in which art tries to serve them. The study of aesthetic functioning is not at all impossible, but it labors under many difficulties: largely because of the subtlety, complexity, and variability of the uses to which art is put. This does not obstruct its actual functioning; one can eat and enjoy food without understanding the biochemistry and physiology of digestion. It is a long and still unfinished task of science to describe all the functions of foods, vitamins, useful bacteria, and other means to nutrition. A given substance may have many simultaneous functions in that total process, and somewhat different ones for different persons: the baby, the athlete, the diabetic.

As to art, it is a mistake to assume that a given work must have some one simple, constant "end" or purpose, and that science fails in not discovering it. Many works of art are obviously versatile and variable in function. *Alice in Wonderland* has one set of values for the child, another for the discerning adult. One must try to see how each detail and constituent grouping operates (or perhaps fails to operate) as a means to a wide range of variable, complex uses. Corneille's *Le Cid* can be said to glorify a monarch, a warrior-hero, and a set of moral ideals; to show and help adjust the conflicting claims of love, feudal and filial loyalty; to entertain a popular audience with exciting action, to please an elite with poetic verse and imagery; to provide a vehicle for actors and actresses under contemporary stage conditions, and so on. One can never, in respect to a great and many-sided work of art, be sure of listing all its functions in the proper emphasis and interrelation. They change

from age to age: *Le Cid,* as a French classic, is now an instrument in patriotic, literary education for the young.

However vague and multiple may be the aims and functions of a work of art, however ineffective and conflicting its means to them, one can still try to describe them as they are. To analyze them functionally does not mean to look for exact, efficient adaptation to an end where none exists. A chisel or a coffee grinder may have one simple purpose and a single, fixed adaptation of the means to it, but a work of art is under no such obligation. It can sometimes do most good by being many-sided, loosely adaptable to changing psychic needs. Perhaps an occasional inconsistency or fumbling hesitation is essential to its human fallibility and charm. Perhaps, in a rationalistic and practical age, it can be of greatest value by avoiding the more obvious, cut-and-tried forms of logic and mechanical efficiency.

Efficiency and smooth, successful fitness of the more obvious, impersonal kind, as in industrial machines and processes, often arouse resentment by their cold, inhuman, fixed precision. People whose minds work with cold, mathematical exactness and rigidity, however correct and vast their knowledge, likewise repel the ordinary, confused, bungling, warm-hearted human. To call a man a "thinking machine" is to condemn him. "The mind all logic," said Tagore, "is like a knife all blade; it cuts the hand that uses it." One feels that it has missed something important in life, and is really less successful than it appears. Art, too, can "cloy us with its perfectness," whether in utilitarian fitness or in neat, harmonious, balanced design. Against these, the impulsive, passionate, rebellious side of man protests now and then through romantic, Dionysian movements. All modern science and the civilization based upon it are thus condemned by persons who identify it with a heartless overemphasis on logic, factual knowledge, power, and the "bitch-goddess, Success"—in a very narrow sense of all these terms. To ask, then, that art be transformed into smoothly functioning mechanical devices of this sort would be doubly repellent, not only to extreme romanticists, but to all who cherish the emotional and aesthetic values of life.

There is another kind of efficiency, however, and a more indirect kind of success. Paradoxically, one way to achieve it is through the very forms of art which denounce and mock success and efficiency, reason and common sense. "The heart has its reasons, which reason does not know." For centuries, types of art have flourished whose

main function, psychologically and socially, was to mock and flout rationality, neatness, dignity, propriety, and all the other conventional virtues. The clown or buffoon, in countless forms, has poked fun at them. He has been whipped for his impudence, then welcomed back by monarchs weary of the cares and formalities of state. Periodic orgies, feasts of unreason, and Dionysian revels release the tense inhibitions of half-civilized man for a while; to be followed, no doubt, by remorseful headaches and repentance, but by some salutary effects as well. A similar but more restrained social role is played today by burlesque and slapstick comedy, pictorial caricatures, erotic fantasy in film and fiction, and the use of alcohol. A surrealist artist manufactured, a few years ago, a fur-lined coffee cup which was shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. "These crazy artists!" people said; but an effective jibe had been uttered at the universal craze for streamlined functionalism. Women's hats and other garments often seem to men absurdly impractical; they are not much use in keeping out rain or cold; they are cut down to mere scraps of felt and silk, or piled high with miscellaneous ornaments. They suggest a charming, whimsical frivolity, rather soft and helpless, in need of strong, efficient, male protection. These very qualities serve not only aesthetic but practical functions, whether or not the woman and her escort realize it, in helping to stimulate attitudes conducive to mating and the perpetuation of the race.

Now and in the past the arts have exercised obscure and devious functions in the emotional, imaginative life of man, often effectively and powerfully, but in a rather intuitive, unconscious way. To make them more fully conscious, rational, and purposeful—scientific in the broad sense of that word—does not mean spoiling them or trying to replace them by methods more suitable in mechanical engineering. It means a systematic effort to understand the real nature of the factors involved, to think out the highest aims and values to be sought, and to pursue these by the most appropriate, effective means, whatever they may be. This is humanistic technology. There is nothing inherently noble about inefficiency and failure; and there is nothing wrong with success and efficiency in general, or with intelligence, but only with their misconception and misuse. They can be devoted to the highest moral, aesthetic, and intellectual values, or only to money, political power, and faster cars.

"Success in art" is not merely a matter of money and fame, as it is commonly understood, but of achieving a worth-while goal in and through one's technical skill with a certain medium. Creative originality, the goal of contributing something important to the world's cultural heritage of art, is achieved all too seldom in comparison with the vast numbers of aspiring young artists in each generation. If we could think out our goals in this field more clearly and specifically, as well as the potential means to them—technical, mental, educational, and economic—the percentage of success might be higher. In addition, real creative merit might be more quickly appreciated in its time and not left to starve in a garret. Financial help, unfortunately, is not enough. More must be learned about the psychological and educational requirements of creativity, and of how skill and talent can be channeled along culturally important lines. While the aestheticians argue about "meaning in art," our schools of painting, music, and literature are turning out thousands of graduates with plenty of technical skill and no idea of what to do with it. Still worse, they have never been helped or advised to start thinking intelligently about the problem: "What, specifically, do I want to accomplish in and with this product, and how can I best do so with the means at hand?" The larger question, also, is seldom even stated in art education, or in allocating wealth for the support of art: "What kinds of result, for which art can be a means, are most urgently needed at present, and how can we best achieve them?"

If more aesthetic value can sometimes be derived from loosely integrated, flexible, informal, and casual works of art than from the opposite, science will not insist that all art should be as mechanical as a dynamo, or as rigidly fixed in some predetermined cycle of operation. But, by the same token, open-minded study and experiment may show that aesthetic and moral aims can, in some cases, be more carefully thought out and more efficiently achieved in new ways without serious loss, and with a gain in total value. To deny this *a priori* is as groundless as the other extreme. Only incorrigible romanticists today deny a place to intelligent thinking in art, or place complete reliance on the "divine madness" of emotional impulse. Intelligence, in art as elsewhere, involves the rational choice of ends and the realistic adaptation of whatever means to them are most effective. In observing the partial analogy between works of art and other man-made instruments, there is danger of exaggerating

this analogy and assuming that methods used in physical technology can be taken over without change into psychic and aesthetic fields. But there is an opposite danger, of refusing to admit real similarities in the problems involved, or to act accordingly.

4. The relation of functional analysis to larger problems of evaluation

Part of the present antagonism toward a functional approach to art arises from the long history of dogmatic, unrealistic theories in philosophy and aesthetics about the "true end" of art: whether it should glorify God, teach a moral lesson, please the public, allow the artist to express himself, or achieve some other single purpose. Most of these theories are highly oversimplified, trying to reduce all the manifold, changing functions of art to some one concept such as "beauty" or "pleasure." The problem is further confused by the refusal of many artists and romantic critics to admit that a work of art has any purpose, end, or function at all, except to be what it is, to exist as a glorious, self-sufficient, intrinsic good.

Nothing can be intrinsically good, from the standpoint of naturalistic humanism, except good experience, good conscious living. Nothing else can be good for humans except as a means to that process, or as an example of it. The production, use, and enjoyment of art can thus be intrinsically good as conscious activities, although they are not always so. *Works of art* as products—pictures, poems, and sonatas—can be good only instrumentally, as means to good experience in someone at some time, or as helping to develop mental or physical powers or social conditions which themselves are means to good experience. No work of art or "objective" quality in art (such as unity or balance) can be good in itself; no rule of art is right or true *a priori*. Its value must be demonstrated as conducive, directly or indirectly, to some kind of good experience, aesthetic or other. It has *aesthetic* value as a means to good aesthetic experience. No kind of art is better than any other except as a means to better experience for someone.

What constitutes "good experience," and what kinds are better than others, are questions for endless debate. So, also, is the question of what outer and inner means are best for it. Different cultures, periods, and types of person have different answers. There

are countless varieties of good experience for humans, and different kinds of art are means to many of them. Variety, change, mental development, pleasure, happiness, power, freedom, understanding, and healthy, harmonious exercise of natural functions are common modern standards of good experience. All can be served by art, but art is never the sole or sufficient means to them. Their relative values for a given type of person, group, or occasion cannot be reduced to any fixed, specific formula.

Works of art can be powerful instruments, even when shaped through some blind, impulsive, inner urge, with little thought as to what their actual effects may be. A child or a lunatic can make a poison or explosive by ignorantly mixing certain ingredients. He may give the poison to a playmate, or set off the explosive, without intending it or understanding how it operates. The artist who produces something or the dealer who sells it merely to make money or to satisfy some inner drive, without thought of its possible consequences, may likewise do great good or harm. Art as a technical means of controlling human experience and behavior through perceptual stimuli and guides is still in a largely primitive, prescientific stage. Little is known of the psychological factors involved, or of how it can produce effects which are, at times, profound and far-reaching in the lives of individuals, and capable of changing the course of history.

One step toward understanding them is to clear away the semi-mystical, anti-rational conceptions which obstruct inquiry, and to examine the forms and functioning of art objectively, as in other fields we have studied the operation of different foods and drugs, their immediate and deferred effects on people of different types under different conditions. Humanity survived, it is true, for about a million years without the aid of science in nutrition and medicine, but with a high disease rate, much suffering, and a short life expectancy. The gradual replacement of guesswork and superstition by tested knowledge of means and ends in this field is bringing good results, and few complain about the loss of freedom to be miserable. Art has done very well indeed at times, during a shorter period, without the help of science. Romantic individualists insist that it should go on so forever, trusting only to the free, creative impulse of the artist. Others want it to become, once more, a handmaid to the church or state, or to some social class or doctrine. Thus the

choice seems limited to freedom or arbitrary regimentation, both without tested knowledge. Science is not, in itself, a kind of regimentation; it only points out more effective ways of achieving whatever one wants to achieve, such as health and longevity. It shows the probable results of acting in one way or another, and invites us to decide between them. Eventually, people usually decide to follow its advice after some grumbling at having to change their habits, and with a transitional stage of maladjustment. There is no ground for assuming that ignorance of facts and causal relations is necessary for the production and use of good art, any more than it is for the production and use of good food and medicine.

To set up rational goals and standards for evaluating art, we need more tested, objective information about the varieties of art which now exist and have existed; the varieties of aesthetic and other functions which have been expected of them; with what success and with what further consequences, individual and social. This is partly a task for psychological and sociological experimentation under controlled conditions; partly one of interpreting and correlating historical, sociological, and anthropological data on the functioning of art in various cultures. To a large extent, these are descriptive, factual problems which can be performed without attempting full evaluations or assuming debatable standards. In a relativistic manner, we can seek to discover how, if effect A is desired, it can be most effectively secured (if at all) through a certain type of art, in relation to specified types of person and situation. We can generalize, moreover, on the extent to which such effects are in accord with various current standards of aesthetic value, good experience, good personality, moral conduct, public interest, and social progress. Final evaluations and decisions lead beyond the range of descriptive science. They involve an "act of will," a conative process, which is often unconscious or concealed under specious argument. They cannot be logically inferred from factual propositions. But with the aid of science they can be made more informed and rational where the desire to make them so exists.

It is not the task of morphology, as a specialized branch of aesthetics, to study in detail the functioning of art in society or its effects on individual observers. Nor is its task to formulate standards of value or apply them in the criticism of artists or their works. It is the special task of morphology to describe and differentiate the

main types of form in art. This can best be done in terms of a strictly limited functional analysis of each type and style, and of typical examples. One can describe the Gutenberg printing press as a functional form, as to its mode of operation, its general aim and method: to reproduce verbal texts in large numbers easily and cheaply. To describe it merely as to its physical shape, materials, and appearance would not be very enlightening. But one need not go so far as to trace the wider uses and effects of the printing press in modern life, as they ramify through every phase of civilized activity and thought. It is one thing to state how opium affects the human organism directly, inducing sleep and dreams. It is another to evaluate the physical, psychological, social, and moral consequences of the opium habit in various countries. One can show how various types and examples of art tend in general to stimulate different perceptual and other responses. Some emphasize and invite attention to their visual, surface ornamentation, as in a vase or rug; others to bare, strong fitness for some practical use, as in an Italian rapier; still others to long trains of fantasy, as in a tale of marvelous adventure like the *Odyssey*. If the type or example tends to work very differently for different types of person such as young and old, men and women, this, too, can be noted. Certain types are obviously adapted for the use of young children, others for adolescents; others are comprehensible and interesting only to erudite adults.

5. Changing functions of the arts in cultural history

Some works of art are suited to special uses, and if these decline they become fossils of cultural history, interesting only to the archaeologist. Others take on new functions, prove themselves adapted to new social uses which their makers never dreamed of, and thus acquire a new lease on life. So a mask for driving away the devils of disease in Uganda may end up on a wall in some Parisian salon. Even the obsolete artifact takes on an intellectual function for the scientific historian in revealing facts about the past.

In the course of history new forms of art are constantly being produced and submitted to the arbiters of taste. Some win favor and create new demands. Such are motion-picture films in our day.

They have the social function, among others, of providing large-scale, inexpensive mass entertainment to persons of various ages and mental levels.

Commercial advertising is another comparatively new function for the arts in modern times; not only in pictorial and typographical layouts, but also in tunes and verses over the radio, and in novel devices such as flashing electric lights and three-dimensional displays. Out of such popular forms, at first scorned by serious art lovers, innovations of greater cultural value often arise. The primary question from a functional standpoint is not how good they are as art, but how they fit into modern living. Commercial art, including such items as attractive packaging, is an integral part of our capitalistic, free-enterprise, consumer-directed economy. It helps the sellers of goods and services to compete for public favor in an open market; it helps create desires for new products, and to make people eager for improvements in every phase of life, though often unwisely and too anxiously.To evaluate it thoroughly is a complex moral and aesthetic problem in which the first step is to see exactly how it operates in relation to other trends and factors in contemporary democratic society.

Commercial art has been studied, produced, and tested along functional, experimental lines, with the aid of psychological and sociological knowledge and techniques, perhaps to a greater extent than any other branch of contemporary art. Financial inducements (instead of the religious and other motives of earlier times) have led its leaders to think out in an open-minded, careful manner what its aims are in each case—usually to establish a favorable attitude toward some product on the part of a particular type of person under certain conditions. The spiritual limitations of its aims and techniques are all too obvious: its concern with tooth paste and cigarettes instead of fugues and philosophy. But the more serious cultural agencies—universities, museums, churches, symphony orchestras, and the like—are learning from its methods and its studies of human nature how to advance their loftier aims.

As liberal education becomes more democratic, international, and secular, the arts take on more important functions in this realm as means of developing a balanced, broadly educated, harmonious personality; of imparting selected elements in the cultural heritage to each successive generation; and of developing mutual respect and

understanding among various racial, national, and religious groups. As art thus acquires new functions and new technical means to them, it loses others, wholly or partly. Some arts have lost part of their educational function, at least for a time. As literacy grows, society is less dependent on painting and oratory to convey ideas. Pictures play a less important role for theological, moral, and political indoctrination than in medieval times. Photography is cheaper and more efficient for exact visual representation and for some aesthetic values as well. Painting seeks types of form and function in which it can still compete successfully with other media. It specializes in the more purely aesthetic appeal, and on non-representative or radically stylized forms to achieve it.

Whether the exchange is a net gain or loss for art and for civilization in general is an interesting question for the philosophy of history, in relation to the theory of progress. A function given up by one agency is not necessarily abandoned entirely. It may be taken over partly or wholly by some other agency. Secular schools have taken over much of the church's former responsibility for education. Applied science now does much that was formerly attempted by magical and religious art. Poetry is replaced by prose for serious philosophical or scientific theorizing.

The aesthetic functions of art have often been ignored or minimized in the past, by comparison with others roughly classed as "nonaesthetic." These are concerned with other ends such as health, food, victory, or salvation after death rather than with the immediate experience of the object as perceived. Aesthetic and non-aesthetic functions often overlap and co-operate, as in the belief that a beautiful, well-made statue is more apt to please the gods. Sometimes they conflict with one another, as when taboos are laid on representational art for fear of divine punishment. The competing demands of use and beauty are common in our era, and also the attempt to reconcile them.

In primitive cultures, much stress was laid on the magical powers of certain types of art, such as amulets and ritual dances, to ward off evil spirits, bring rain, and kill distant enemies. In many ancient and medieval cultures, the religious functions of art were emphasized: its power to please the gods; to help one reach heaven or Nirvana; to make humans more devout and obedient, more receptive to divine grace and revelation. In a secular age, the same

works of art tend to be admired more for their aesthetic qualities of form and style. Religious myths are enjoyed as beautiful fantasies, and as interesting, prescientific attempts at explaining phenomena.

All the supposed magical and religious values of art can be expressed in functional terms. The scientist will then ask which of these historic functions were and are really effective and which are merely imaginary, though attributed to art through ignorance of actual conditions, causes, and effects. Sometimes the supposed function contains a mixture of the real and the imaginary—the real one operating by means which the user controls more or less uncertainly without understanding them. A shaman's dances, spells, and charms may actually cure a patient through inspiring faith and confidence, or kill an enemy through fright.

Modern naturalistic humanism does not deny the obvious fact that religious art has greatly benefited man in countless ways. Such art has helped him unite through common ties of belief and emotive ritual; it has helped him to develop profound conceptions of the universe and man's place in it. It has helped him to conceive ideas of superhuman, supernatural personality and of a moral order on earth. It has inspired much of his greatest art, thus often contributing more aesthetic value than when this aim is consciously emphasized. All these real functions of religious art can be described on a naturalistic basis, and accorded high value in humanistic terms.

Naturalistic humanism locates all human values within the realm of experience in this life. It is skeptical about the claims of art to supernatural, transcendental functions. But it recognizes the reality and value of mystic and religious experience *as experience* in this life, and hence of art which contributes to it, even if such experience is mistakenly interpreted as to its actual nature, objects, and causes. This is not to say that mystic experience is always an unmixed good. The belief in supernatural spirits, a transcendental world above nature, and a future life whose values excel and conflict with earthly ones may entail a drastic sacrifice of earthly values and a painful inward conflict for which the occasional ecstasies of mystic experience only partly compensate. It is for the future to discover whether the values of mystic, otherworldly art and experience can be reconciled with those of scientific naturalism and

humanism. Is belief in the supernatural a prerequisite for them? Modern man has learned to respect and enjoy through art many modes of thought and imagination which he cannot accept as factual accounts of reality.

Philosophic naturalism does not imply or require a preference for so-called "naturalistic" art such as that of Jordaens, Courbet, or Zola. It does not imply a preference for so-called "sensate" over "idealistic" art, or for that which stresses sensuous pleasure, surface appearance, or sordid realism over classical beauty, moral and spiritual values. It does not imply a preference for the "humanistic" art of late Greece or the Italian Renaissance over the mystical, transcendental arts of India and the European Middle Ages. From the standpoint of naturalistic humanism all value in art, as in other cultural products, is determined by the quality of the experience which it helps to produce, either directly in aesthetic perception or indirectly, as through aiding in the development of mental powers and a harmonious, co-operative personality. It is not to be assumed that "naturalistic" art is the most valuable kind from this standpoint, or more valuable than other kinds in which the imaginative and idealizing power of the artist are given wider scope. Every great style of art contains important potential values for the broadly educated mind. It is a task for criticism and value-theory to appraise the distinctive merits and limitations of each as contributions to good experience for various types of person and for society as a whole.

An experiential conception of art's aesthetic functions is not necessarily hedonistic, in the narrow, traditional sense of overemphasis on sensuous pleasures and amusements. The immediate delight of seeing and hearing, and of being helped to imagine, richly colorful, complex images is basic in aesthetic experience. Art has no need to apologize for contributing joy and pleasure to an often grim, tragic world. But this is not entirely a matter of hedonic tone. Many factors enter aesthetic experience in addition to sensation, sensuous fantasy, and the pleasures thereof. It can also include, in varying proportion, intellectual activities such as reasoning, conception, understanding, and inquiry. It can include moral and critical evaluation, the development of ideas and standards, the pursuit of spiritual goods. Modern naturalism is, on the whole, sympathetic toward Greek Epicureanism as a courageous, early at-

tempt to build a value-system on a naturalistic basis; but it recognizes the errors and limitations of that early attempt and departs from it in many important respects.

6. Art, aesthetics, and technology

A more dynamic, operational approach is greatly needed in aesthetics at the present time, in view of frequent overemphasis on the static, cognitive aspects of expression, symbolism, and meaning in art. These phenomena can also be described in terms of behavior and experience. One can show how an artist expresses something, to whom, and with what effects; how symbols acquire cultural and private meanings, and are used in attempts at communication or concealment. But when logicians, epistemologists, and metaphysicians discuss art, they often ignore its active role as a means of producing desired responses, experiences, attitudes, actions, and predispositions in observers.

The present essay has been mainly concerned with works of art as operative mechanisms, and with ways of studying them from a functional standpoint. The same approach can be made to many other types of phenomena studied in aesthetics and related fields. It can be applied to the psychological responses which are made to art and stimulated by it; to aesthetic and other experiences of art. What are their psychological, sociological, and educational functions? The answer to such questions involves, first of all, a descriptive and empirical phase: one must inquire how each type of process actually works and has worked in various cultures, as part of a larger and more diversified process of interaction among individuals and their environments. A single response to a work of art is, for an individual, a part of his total experience in that hour, that day, and that stage of his life cycle; it is influenced by previous events in his mental history, and may affect his future thoughts and attitudes more or less deeply.

As to art in general, the way it functions aesthetically is a part of its larger social functioning. This includes its interaction with other social factors such as governments, churches, schools, and business enterprises. In this regard, the arts are types of occupation. Artists and those associated with them in the production and administration of art are overlapping subgroups in society; their

varied, changing social roles can be thus described with reference to different periods and cultures. Those in medieval Europe are significantly different from those in modern times, and those in a capitalistic democracy from those in a communist dictatorship. The social functioning of an artist as a man, or of art as a métier, is not the same as that of works of art. To study the former leads to questions about who supports the artist and his family, what socio-economic status he has, and who can direct or influence his work.

A functional approach can also be made to the processes of art criticism and evaluation, and to the verbal and other instruments used therein. What activities are carried on by art critics and theorists in various types of social order? How influential are they, and how free to express independent views? Where and how do they derive their power to influence opinion? Their beliefs and attitudes? How do they think, make up their minds, and express themselves on what is good or bad, beautiful or ugly, important or trivial, up-to-date or passé in works of art both old and new? How are their opinions related to deeper currents in style and taste, to the trends in art history itself? To what extent are trends in aesthetics and art criticism influenced by trends in art, and vice versa? How do explicit verbal standards, theories of value, rules, slogans, catchwords, alleged laws and principles of art actually work in helping to determine evaluations of art and of policies in dealing with art? Important decisions along this line are made in law (e.g., as affecting censorship) and in education (e.g., as affecting curriculum organization and teaching methods). How are the more explicit, professed, rationalized factors therein related to the more irrational, unconscious, and emotional ones?

After the descriptive, fact-finding stage in such inquiries should come the evaluative and practical stage: that of asking how well or ill these activities are being conducted at present, and how well the verbal and other devices used in them operate as tools of thought and action. People are usually impatient to reach final evaluations, however little they know about the facts. Something is gained if judgment can be suspended or made tentative until the facts of actual operation can be fairly well understood. If we can know at least that A is usually an effective means to B under certain conditions, but with probable aftereffects C and D, we can decide more intelligently how to deal with problems involving them. We can

perhaps experiment with A as a means to B, taking B as a tentative goal, and see whether undesired aftereffects can be avoided. The decision may never be final; the process of experiment may go on indefinitely, with continued revision of aims and methods. But we can hope for some amount of growth in wisdom through experience and reflection, with the aid of more tested knowledge and a fuller understanding of problems, causes, effects, and recurrent tendencies.

Once it is recognized that the aesthetic arts are as functional in their own way as engineering and applied science are in theirs, the next step is to ask whether they, too, cannot be made more effective for human welfare by the greater use of scientific methods and resources. The arts are technics, as the ancients well understood in grouping the skills of beauty and those of use under one broad concept, that of *ars* or *techné*. What we now call "arts," in the restricted, aesthetic sense of the term, are technics dealing with mental, psychic means and ends. They have to operate in distinctive ways, for which the specific devices and procedures of physical science are often ineffective. New ones, appropriate to the factors involved, must be developed. But the basic mental processes of modern science are applicable throughout nature and human activity: the open-minded, objective search for knowledge and the attempt to use it for advancing human welfare in all fields. There is no essential, radical difference between the arts and the more utilitarian technics which we now call "applied sciences." The latter are fields which science entered first and now controls more thoroughly. Each applied science was preceded there by primitive, groping, often unsuccessful attempts to deal with the same phenomena and achieve similar ends.

As aesthetics gradually becomes scientific, it is building on the long practical experience of the arts, as well as on older sciences such as psychology and sociology. It continues to learn from art, but is developing increasing power to aid and guide the arts in return. It is developing not only as a pure science, but also as a true technology: as the scientific study and guidance of technics within a limited area.

As time goes on, and as scientific methods are developed in aesthetics, the production and use of art will be treated more as a branch of scientific technology. Art will be regarded as applied aesthetics in the sense in which chemical engineering is applied chemistry, and in which education and psychotherapy are applica-

tions of psychology, sociology, and other pure sciences. This does not mean that artists will take orders from aestheticians, or that aestheticians will try to give them. Each will learn from the other, as pure science learns from experimental applications, in the common task of making art a more effective means to good experience for all humans.

To say that art will be treated more as a kind of technology, and substantially influenced by science, does not mean that artists will cease to be emotional or imaginative; that they will try to reduce all art to measurements and formulas. If the results desired in and from art require methods radically different from those of present science, such methods will be used, with deeper understanding of the reasons for them, and perhaps with more success in achieving ancient goals. All the major goals of technology, such as nourishment, safety, health, comfort, justice, happiness and wisdom, are ancient and perennial; the means are different when science aids, and success is more assured unless external obstacles intervene. Present failures, such as wars and depressions, reveal the lack of effective technics for democratic social control. They are not the fault of technology as such, but of its misuse and overdevelopment along physical lines at the expense of humanistic ones.

At present, there is much sentimental resistance to the idea of scientific method in art and aesthetics. This is due partly to the common misconception of such method as essentially concerned with exact proof and measurement, as in the physical sciences. Traditionalists maintain also that science can deal only with means, not ends, and that choice of the latter must be left to more non-rational, authoritarian, and mystical sources. Among these last they love to think of art as a haven of escape from the dangerous advance of science. Such attempts to hold back the main trend of Western civilization are doomed to failure. Science is rapidly entering art and aesthetics; but it is being broadened and humanized in the process.

Science cannot prove that certain moral or aesthetic ends are best, but neither can any other agency. Science can at least throw a good deal of light on the subject. There is ample cause to fear that science may be harmfully used by some political powers and by a few individual scientists. Many premature and pseudo-scientific claims to explain the arts and solve the artist's problems have

aroused some fear of all scientific method in art. These fears are not unjustified. Even genuine scientific knowledge and power can be used for evil as well as for good, as this atomic age is well aware. Art is a tremendous power for good if rightly used, surpassing that of atomic energy along a different line, and equally tremendous for bad if wrongly used. It is a task for social controls, with the aid of realistic, enlightened, moral idealism, to ensure that all the great powers of scientific technology shall be used for good, in both the physical and psychological realms. In the meantime, the Western world proceeds upon the optimistic, Baconian faith that increase of knowledge and power in all fields is more likely to be good than evil in the long run, and that science in each field is therefore justified in seeking it.

VIII

THE CONCEPT OF BEAUTY IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATURALISM*

1. Recent avoidance of the term by scholars

Among art critics, historians, and philosophers who aspire to scientific method or objective scholarship, the terms "beautiful" and "beauty" have fallen into some disfavor in recent years. Until World War I, many books and articles appeared with titles such as "The Sense of Beauty," "The Psychology of Beauty," and "The Philosophy of the Beautiful." To define "the beautiful" correctly, and give a true account of its nature and criteria, was commonly regarded as the sole or central task of aesthetics. As a branch of philosophy, aesthetics was defined as "the philosophy of beauty."

The tendency in recent aesthetics to avoid these words has been marked and notable. The concept no longer holds a central, pre-eminent position in aesthetics as a whole. In periodicals and bibliographies of aesthetics and criticism, it seldom appears,[1] and when used is often intended in a derisive way, as in references to "Beauty with a capital B."

Some of the reasons are obvious. Aesthetics has been developing rapidly along scientific, naturalistic lines in the past half-century. It has come to include *allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* or the general science of art, which attempts a synthesis of factual information concerning the arts and related modes of experience and behavior from all available sources, including psychology, cultural history, and the social sciences. It has become aware of the great diversity and scope of the phenomena which it has to investigate, and of the need for a complex apparatus of terms to describe and interrelate them. The single concept of beauty, along with a few other tradi-

* Published in *Revue Internationale de Philosophie,* Fasc. 1, No. 31 (Brussels, 1955).

[1] Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* (New York, 1905) contained a long article on "Beauty." Runes's *Dictionary of Philosophy* (New York, 1942) has none.

tional "aesthetic categories," such as the ugly, sublime, and pretty, seem quite inadequate to do so; they must be supplemented by many others of more precise meaning. These categories are, moreover, strongly evaluative in tone, expressing praise or derogation. As such, they seem confusing and irrelevant in those branches of aesthetics, art history, and art criticism which try to be descriptive and factual, like the older sciences. Scholars here are trying to avoid "subjective," personal value judgments upon works of art, historic styles, or individual artists. To call these beautiful or ugly seems to such a scholar a mere expression of his personal tastes. Instead, he strives to analyze and explain each type of art as a cultural phenomenon in its own right. Historians and psychologists are increasingly aware of the great variety of tastes in art, of what seems beautiful to different cultural groups and individuals. To express their own moral or aesthetic judgments in the midst of a factual account would seem to them as impairing its scholarship or scientific validity.

Even in those branches of aesthetics and criticism where evaluation is the main concern, such ancient terms as "beauty" have come to seem hopelessly vague, ambiguous, and controversial. Artists, critics, and the general public are aware of the long failure of aestheticians to agree upon a definition of beauty or an objective criterion for estimating it. They are impressed by the relativity and diversity of tastes. Our individualistic tradition stresses the right of all, including children, to form their own tastes and find beauty where they will. Every artist demands the right to express himself in art. General rules of beauty and good art are fair game for every hunter, and few philosophers or teachers now dare to advocate one. Art and artists are constantly being evaluated through active favor or neglect and through verbal comment; but usually in terms other than "beautiful" or "ugly." Critical standards are diverse, pluralistic, and unsystematic. Critics pride themselves on working out their own; on avoiding hackneyed terms. New catchwords for evaluation, such as "escapist" and "derivative," follow each other in rapid succession. "Beauty" is out of fashion and scorned by sophisticates, not only because of its theoretical difficulties, but because it suggests the naïve, rhapsodic enthusiasm of sentimental art lovers.

Since "beauty" has been so long identified with the more genteel, polite, academic forms of neo-classic art, the contemporary artist who

revolts from these is quick to deny any intention to create beauty. Even commercial advertisers, sensing that "beautiful" is a stale and hackneyed term of praise, are ever in search of new epithets such as "glamorous," which in turn become quickly stale and ineffective. Aestheticians are weary of being asked, "Oh, are you still trying to define beauty?" So they, too, often hasten to renounce that ambition, and explain that aesthetics now has other things to do.

2. Can it be improved as a tool of aesthetics and criticism?

The time has not come to try to rehabilitate "beauty" as an active, technical term of criticism, and it will certainly never occupy the dominant place in aesthetics which it held in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. No single concept can now be stretched that far. But not all the problems formerly attached to it have been solved "by evaporation." It is well to keep reviewing them in the light of changing conceptions of art and aesthetic experience, and restating them, when advisable, in more contemporary terms. One can hardly face the basic, perennial issues of ethics and aesthetics without mentioning beauty, truth, goodness, honor, love, morality, and human progress, however much these words have been misused or tiresomely argued in the past. One does not escape the difficulties of aesthetic evaluation by merely changing terms. Sometimes, after trying new ideas and new names for them, we turn back to the old ones as somehow indispensable; we then take up the task once more of trying to redefine them, to cleanse them of unwanted accretions and emotional associations, and to use them again as tools of inquiry and appraisal.

The concept of beauty is still worth studying, not only for the important problems and ideas directly connected with it, but also as a test case for all other terms of critical evaluation, all terms implying aesthetic value or disvalue or expressing an emotional attitude. Much of the following article applies to all of them as well as to "beauty."

Defining beauty is in part a verbal problem of semantics, logic, and lexicography. As such it is mainly concerned with a certain word, its partial equivalents in other languages, and the meanings which have been attached to them. In part, it is also a problem of ascertaining and demonstrating the truth about the things to which

this word refers: about the qualities in art and experience which have been called "beautiful." These two sets of problems can be distinguished to some extent and dealt with separately, but only partly so. A thorough consideration of the verbal meanings leads quickly to the deeper issues of fact and value. Much as one might like to avoid the deeper issues and handle the question on a simple, verbal level, it is impossible. Consciously or not, one makes philosophic assumptions and controversial statements.

From the standpoint of empiricism, there is a tacit error in asserting that "beauty is" any particular thing or quality, objective or subjective, natural or transcendental, with the implication that beauty is and can be this alone; that this is the only right, true definition. For it implies that the word "beauty" has some one meaning by the nature of things; that there is some unique, eternal essence to which this name belongs, which aesthetics must discover and identify. On the contrary, it is a cardinal point of modern semantics that words are man-made things, tools of thought, observation, communication, and intelligent action. Men have every right to change and redistribute them for the sake of greater expediency in such use. There is no one true meaning of "beauty." Any meaning in current usage, especially one approved by standard reference works which express contemporary expert recommendations, is correct, at least within a specific field of discourse. What "beauty" refers to is no single, clear, and distinct idea like "triangle," no easily perceptible, measurable phenomenon like "color," no definite hypothesis to explain phenomena like "electron." The only short, simple, correct answer to the question "what is beauty?" is to say, "beauty is many different things, not yet well understood, to which the name 'beauty' has been applied."

At the same time, it is possible to argue that a certain sense of the word is most advantageous for use in aesthetics; perhaps as clearest in connotation and denotation, as most relevant to important issues in theory and practice, most in accord with present scientific beliefs about the facts and values concerned. Some imply beliefs which science now tends to reject. This does not prove them false, but they should at least be listed as controversial, as held by certain schools of thought rather than as established facts. Most dictionary definitions of important theoretical terms include or imply a proposition about the nature of the thing being defined which

someone might regard as controversial. If the definition is to be informative and useful, it cannot ignore such issues completely for the sake of neutrality. Without losing much of its value, it cannot merely assert that a certain name is applied in current usage to a certain idea, meaning, or set of meanings as a purely psychological construct. It is often important to know whether the thing defined is real or fictitious; not necessarily as an ultimate, metaphysical reality, but as an established fact of history or a stable type of phenomenon. Children want to know whether fairies and Santa Claus are real or imaginary. Webster evades this issue in defining "fairy" as "a minor supernatural being capable of assuming human form . . ." but not in defining "dragon" as "a fabulous animal, generally represented as a monstrous winged and scaly serpent." When, as often happens, moderns disagree on what is real and what is not, the controversial proposition can be stated as a belief or theory held by certain persons. Thus Webster defines "ether," in physics, as "a medium postulated in the undulatory theory of light as permeating all space . . ." and adds that "its existence is at present denied by many." Something of the sort can well be said in defining "beauty" so as to include the important controversial theories about its nature.

Language evolves together with knowledge and culture; as these grow, more subtle distinctions are made in our conception of nature and experience. Vague, undifferentiated concepts are analyzed into more precise ones; mistaken beliefs about the world are corrected. On the whole, it is well to follow established usage in defining and applying words, for mutual understanding; but it is also necessary to keep refining language so as to express and indicate subtler distinctions and more complex, far-reaching interrelationships; so as to serve as efficiently as possible in modern intellectual and practical life. An ancient, ambiguous concept like "beauty" needs frequent revision in the light of new knowledge and verbal usage. If it proves inadequate to express the necessary distinctions in the field, it must be supplemented by other terms. If too hopelessly inadequate or loaded with false beliefs and confusing associations, it may have to be dropped from technical, precise discussion. Thus the word "soul" is almost never used in scientific psychology, although it could perhaps be redefined to fit the modern notions of personality and mental activity. It is still used in casual and literary

discourse, as in saying that "brevity is the soul of wit." Likewise, "beautiful" is adequate for casual conversation, but not for clearly describing or evaluating art. It is usable though somewhat shopworn as an emotive term in poetry itself, where ambiguity is often a virtue.

It is still worth while to try to sharpen it up a little for technical use. Instead of arbitrarily proposing a new, short definition, the more modest, practicable task is to list and rearrange the chief existing ones, so as to bring out their interrelation as alternative answers to persistent problems. One can try to reword them as clearly and concisely as possible, and recommend certain ones as most advisable in aesthetics. There is no need or possibility of eliminating all but one meaning; too many different ones are strongly attached to the word "beauty." At most, we can try to reduce the number to a few basic ideas, with suggestions for indicating which is intended.

It is not at all necessary that all theories about the facts and values to which "beauty" refers should be expressed in the form of *definitions* of the word. Many of them could as well be stated as supplementary propositions about such facts and values, or about "beauty" in a neutral, current sense. Persons of radically different political beliefs can agree on a basic, neutral definition of "government," and go on to express their beliefs about the best form of government in supplementary statements.

Such a partial clarification of the concept of beauty will be attempted in the following pages. But the deeper, more theoretical problems cannot be detached from it, so we shall consider both together. The chief of these is the issue between subjectivism and objectivism.

3. Is there a middle ground between subjectivism and objectivism?

There is little difficulty in defining "beauty" on the superficial level of a short, abridged dictionary. This is usually confined to listing a few approximate synonyms for the word in ordinary conversation. No one is likely to deny the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary's* statement that "beautiful" means "full of beauty, possessing the qualities which constitute beauty," or even "pleasing to the senses or intellect." Likewise, "beauty is that quality or combina-

tion of qualities which affords keen pleasure to the senses, especially that of sight, or which charms the intellectual or moral faculties." These may not be the only meanings of the term, but they are certainly in common use. Webster gives a similar wording in the *New International Dictionary:* "1. Physical loveliness or charm to the senses, originally to the sense of sight; grace or fitness exciting keen intellectual or moral pleasure." These definitions fail to satisfy the aesthetician, however, because they evade the deeper issue of the nature of such qualities and their status in reality, as "inherent in the object" or as "mere subjective feelings."

Definitions proposed for technical use in aesthetics are sometimes equally vague and noncommittal. Thus Webster adds that beauty, in aesthetics, is "that perfection in the sensuous order, and, by extension, in the spiritual order, which excites admiration or delight for itself rather than for its uses, etc." It is "that quality in a thing consummate in its kind which induces immediate pleasure"; it is "the flawless manifestation of an artist's conception," or "the characteristic value of a beautiful thing as apart from any effect it may or does produce." Without more clues to the nature of such perfection, flawlessness, and value, one is still in the dark as to what "beauty" really refers to. One would still like to know how anything can be more or less beautiful than anything else if all beauty is perfection, and what value any beautiful thing can have apart from its effect on the observer.

Fuller elaboration of the concept, as in philosophical treatises, usually leads the author to a definition of beauty which involves not merely a factual summary of current usage, but a theory of aesthetic value and perhaps of its relation to other types of value, as well as of the status of such values in the nature of things. The definition itself is often very brief, and in isolation ambiguous; but the context makes it imply certain controversial propositions, not only about the word "beauty," but also about the things to which that word refers. The familiar definition by St. Thomas Aquinas, *id quod visum placet,* seems at first like a rather easygoing, indiscriminate hedonism. It can be taken to mean that *anything* which gives *any* sort of pleasure through vision is beautiful. But Jacques Maritain's account of the Thomist position, in *Art and Scholasticism,* interprets it as something very different. "The beautiful is what gives . . . not all joy, but joy in knowledge." And "If beauty delights

the mind, it is because beauty is essentially a certain excellence or perfection in the proportion of things to the mind." Hence its three conditions are integrity or perfection, proportion or fitness and harmony, and brightness or radiant splendor. Beauty is "a transcendental concept," "properly predicable only of God," the source of all harmony and radiating brightness. "So Beauty is one of the divine attributes," and we soon arrive at a Christian Neo-Platonism in which the beauty of particular things "is nothing but a similitude of the divine beauty shared among things." True beauty does not include everything that people enjoy looking at, or all visual pleasure; but only those forms which really manifest the divine radiance. This seems like a thoroughly objectivist view, making beauty independent of human tastes, and at the opposite pole from naturalistic empiricism. In concrete application, though, as often happens, it leads to verdicts which any naturalist could approve. Room can be found in this abstract and flexible conception of beauty to praise the battered prostitutes of Rouault and other apparently ugly, earthy forms in art as somehow manifesting the divine radiance. Conversely, aestheticians who agree on general principles often disagree on examples: Tolstoy's subjectivist theory of art is more widely accepted than his estimate of particular artists. Not a few contemporary critics who profess a modest relativism, denying in theory all universal standards, shift from this to the most dogmatic judgments on particular artists, as if they were intrinsically great or mediocre. But it is the theories which concern us chiefly here.

The prevailing modern trend toward empiricism and relativism in value-theory has not silenced all surviving Platonists, as witness C. E. M. Joad.[2] In maintaining the "objectivity of beauty," he declares that "beauty is an independent, self-sufficient object, that as such it is a real and unique factor in the universe, and that it does not depend for being what it is upon any of the other factors in the universe . . . . When I say that a picture or a piece of music is beautiful, I am not making a statement about any feeling that I or any other person or body of persons may have or have had in regard to it, or about a relation subsisting between my mind or the mind of any other person or body of persons and the picture or piece of

[2] *Matter, Life and Value* (London, 1929), pp. 266f.

music in question, but . . . about a quality or property possessed by the picture or piece of music itself." He follows Plato in accepting "the Form of Beauty as the origin of the aesthetic value which belongs to the objects of the sensible world." Beauty is an eternal, nonmaterial, and self-sufficient object, possessing value. H. Osborne holds to the old and obsolete conception of aesthetics as "a branch of critical philosophy" whose "purpose is to understand what is meant by judgments involving the notion of 'beauty.' " [3] A work of art, for him, is "an enduring possibility . . . of a specific set of sensory impressions characterized by beauty in an organic whole of considerable complexity, the constituent parts of which are interpenetrating organic wholes." Of course, not everyone feels such an object to be beautiful, and some feel other things to be beautiful; but this does not worry the self-assured dogmatist. For the right kind of aesthetics can "discriminate genuine from spurious instances of appreciation," and "reject as irrelevant all beauty judgments which are in fact about anything other than an objective nonrelational property of structure."

Definitions of beauty which Joad and Osborne would call subjectivist are much more numerous. Often quoted is Santayana's "pleasure regarded as the quality of a thing." [4] Ogden, Richards, and Wood defined beauty as "synaesthesis," a type of response or experience characterized by "equilibrium with no tendency to action, preserving free play to every impulse with avoidance of frustration." [5] Thus subjectivism is not necessarily hedonistic; it conceives of beauty as a kind or quality of experience, but not necessarily as pleasure. Dewey's wording is rather obscure: "Beauty is the response to that which to reflection is the consummated movement of matter integrated through its inner relations into a single qualitative whole." [6] But he makes it clear that beauty "is properly an emotional term . . . denoting a characteristic emotion." Emotional rapture, he says, has been hypostatized by theory into an essence or intuition, with obstructive results. "In case the term is used in theory to designate the total aesthetic quality of an ex-

[3] *Theory of Beauty* (London, 1952), p. 201.

[4] *The Sense of Beauty* (New York, 1896), p. 49.

[5] *Foundations of Aesthetics* (New York, 1925), p. 72.

[6] *Art as Experience* (New York, 1934), pp. 129–130. Cf. F. J. Mather, *Concerning Beauty* (Princeton, 1935), p. 9: "Beauty is a quality of a human experience, and not of any object."

perience, it is surely better to deal with the experience itself and show whence and how the quality proceeds." Charles Lalo prefers a narrower conception, denying that true aesthetic beauty can occur outside of art, but classing it as a kind of pleasure: *"La beauté est un plaisir complexe et artificiel, né d'une activité du rêve libératrice, organisée comme un jeu, sous une forme harmonieuse, dont la valeur est jugée supérieure et collective, tout ce dynamisme déclenchant communément une puissante résonance affective."* [7]

Neither extreme subjectivism nor the opposite extreme satisfies the popular, common-sense conception of beauty. This is vaguely somewhere between the two. It is commonly believed on one hand that beauty is partly a matter of personal feeling and education; that no one has authority to say what is beautiful and what is not; on the other that it is not entirely a question of taste, that some persons, works of art, and scenes from nature are really more beautiful than others, whether everyone admires them or not. It is hard to find theoretical grounds for reconciling these two beliefs; yet any theory which does not do some justice to both will seem inadequate, not only to the popular mind but to experts actively engaged in the production, criticism, teaching, and management of art. It is a reasonable assumption, moreover, that when two theories have endured as long as the subjectivist and objectivist views of beauty, each has some truth in it; that both are emphasizing different aspects of the same central facts.

Can a middle course be found, then, between the extremes? Certainly not one that will satisfy the extreme objectivist. For any kind of interactionism, finding beauty somewhere in the relation between a perceiver and an external object, strikes him as a disguised form of subjectivism. He is not entirely wrong in this, as we shall see. Fundamentally, no middle ground is possible in epistemology and metaphysics between empiricism and dogmatic rationalism, or between the naturalistic and the supernaturalistic world views. The present essay is based on a philosophy of naturalistic empiricism,[8] and hence will not satisfy mystics, panpsychists, or dualists. Nevertheless, each position can be strengthened by successfully incorporating some strong points of the opposing

[7] *L'expression de la vie dans l'art* (Paris, 1933), pp. 236f.

[8] Much confusion has resulted from the use of the term "naturalism" to denote a general philosophic theory opposed to the various forms of supernaturalism, and also a particular style in modern art. A "naturalistic aesthetics" is

ones. Can the subjectivist view of beauty be developed into something broader and more balanced, by taking over some of the strong points of objectivism?

The main weakness of objectivism is its reliance on a metaphysical doctrine whose foundations were permanently weakened by Hume and which has been increasingly abandoned by science, especially in the humanistic fields. Turning its back on the main, empirical trend of modern science and scholarship, it is in turn ignored by art, criticism, historical scholarship, and scientific aesthetics. The main weakness of subjectivism, on the other hand, is its tendency to ignore the objects, especially works of art, which stimulate and guide aesthetic experience. In overemphasizing the inner, psychological phases of appreciation, it has neglected the varieties of form in the arts and their contribution to the experience of beauty, ugliness, and other aesthetic qualities.

4. The nature of aesthetic experience; affects and their external stimuli

Let us try to see the verbal problem of defining "beauty" in a larger context, as related to the process of responding aesthetically to a sensory stimulus. The *aesthetic attitude* is a type of composite, diversified configuration which may involve all conscious functions, any or all modes of sense perception, along with imagination,

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sometimes understood in the latter sense, as praise and justification for the kind of art produced by Zola, Courbet, and before them by Caravaggio and Jordaens. In the present article we shall understand it much more broadly, as including any aesthetic theory consistent with the philosophy of naturalism. In this sense, a naturalistic aesthetics does not imply a preference for naturalistic or realistic representation in art as opposed to refinement, fantasy, mysticism, idealism, decoration, or stylization. There is much confusion on this point, especially where the term "naturalism" has not come into general use as a successor to "materialism" as a name for the philosophic world-view opposed to metaphysical supernaturalism, transcendentalism, mysticism, dualism, and panpsychism. Santayana and Dewey are its chief modern exponents; see also Y. H. Krikorian (ed.), *Naturalism and the Human Spirit* (New York, 1944). The naturalistic trend in aesthetics as a science is, however, supported by many scholars who are not metaphysical naturalists. Examples of the old, narrow, inadequate conception of naturalistic aesthetics are to be found in A. Lalande's *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie* (Paris, 1947), article on *"Naturalisme";* also in the articles on "Naturalism" in *Encyclopedia of the Arts* (New York, 1946), and *Dictionary of Philosophy* (New York, 1942).

reasoning, conation, and emotion. It is an attitude commonly experienced in looking at pictures, films, or stage plays, reading poetry, or listening to music. In simpler form, it can be directed toward lower-sense stimuli such as foods or perfumes. It differs from the *practical* attitude in that it contains little planning for one's own future action, little attention to thoughts of future ends to be sought or avoided, little effort to adapt successful means to ends. It is on the whole compliant in following clues in the outer stimulus, but these may involve guides to reasoning and planning about imaginary problems, as in a detective story. The aesthetic attitude differs from the *investigative,* as in pure science and philosophy, in that it contains little or no effort to solve intellectual, theoretical problems in an original way. In reading an essay or meditative lyric one may, however, understand and follow the author's reasoning. If one begins to criticize, disagree, or analyze the form in an original way, one's attitude is no longer purely aesthetic. The aesthetic attitude differs from *fantasy-building,* as in dream and reverie, in that attention is focused upon an outer object of sense perception. This may be a page of printed words which stimulate and guide imagination, as in reading a story. If one stops reading, closes one's eyes, and embarks upon an independent fantasy, the attitude is no longer aesthetic, although it may involve an experience of beauty in contemplating the mental images. The *artistic* attitude also differs from the aesthetic in being partly practical; a painter must not only admire a scene but actively adapt his means, control his medium, so as to produce a work of art.

A tendency to assume an aesthetic attitude toward things may become a habit, a type of personality, or a pattern of group behavior. When women are barred from practical affairs, or when idle rich have no practical problems, they often tend to emphasize aesthetic enjoyments. Aesthetic sensitivity can be only one recurrent phase in a varied, well-balanced life. But, through innate predisposition and conditioning, some individuals become more sensitive and active aesthetically than others. They are said to have a keen "sense of beauty," as others have a keen sense of humor or of duty. But there is no special aesthetic faculty or function: no distinct impulse or sentiment of beauty.[9]

[9] S. Alexander's definition of beauty is misleading in this respect: "that which satisfies objectively the aesthetic impulse or sentiment, that is, the constructive impulse used contemplatively, and is beautiful or has value because it pleases

Aesthetic experience is not necessarily pleasant or satisfactory, harmonious or admiring. It often is, but in contemplating art or other objects aesthetically one is often bored, irritated, confused, or disappointed. One may feel the object as ugly rather than beautiful. The aesthetic response may contain any kind of conative (volitional) and emotional component, directed toward the object as a whole or toward some perceived or imagined detail within it, as in anger toward the villain of a play. Many different feelings can be thus combined or experienced successively.

A common and important mechanism and process in experience is that of *projection:* of referring both sensory and affective responses to the object-stimulus toward which they are directed; of feeling and regarding them as attributes or qualities of the object. Locke tried to distinguish "primary" from "secondary" qualities, the former as existing in the object itself (size, number, etc.); the latter as dependent on perception (redness, loudness, sweetness, etc.). As the later British empiricists pointed out, there are no primary qualities, all being directly or indirectly obtained from perceptual experience. Building on this distinction, however, Bosanquet and Santayana spoke of "tertiary qualities" as emotional rather than sensory.[10] Thus the cheerfulness of a fire or the dreariness of a day is a tertiary quality, whereas its redness or grayness is secondary. Some psychologists prefer to call the former "affects" or affective qualities, the latter "percepts" or perceptual qualities. A complex percept such as the appearance of a woman or a statue is "affect-laden" if the object is not only seen but felt as charming, beautiful, delightful, desirable, repulsive, ugly, dangerous, mysterious, or the like. "Affect" must be understood in this connection as including projected conative, as well as emotional and perhaps conceptual responses.

Such projection is not limited to aesthetic experience; it can operate in any attitude. A soldier may feel his enemy as dangerous and hateful while trying to kill him; a lover may feel his beloved as

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us after the manner so described." (*Beauty and Other Forms of Value* [London, 1933], p. 179). A similar error, from the standpoint of modern psychology, is committed by A. Lalande, in his *Vocabulaire,* in defining beauty as *"ce qui provoque chez les hommes un certain sentiment* sui generis *appelé l'émotion esthétique."*

[10] Cf. Alexander, *op. cit.,* pp. 180, 183. Santayana, *op. cit.,* pp. 46f.

beautiful and desirable while trying to win her favor. A dream is not an aesthetic experience, but its mental images are objects of partly conscious attention, and are felt as beautiful, weird, terrifying, or otherwise affect-laden.

The experience of beauty is not, by this interpretation, identical with aesthetic experience. One may become aware of beauty in the midst of practical or intellectual efforts. One may labor anxiously to produce it in art. But the aesthetic attitude is especially favorable to its undistracted, leisurely enjoyment. During aesthetic experience, as in watching a play with untroubled mind, there is a temporary relaxation of efforts to accomplish things or solve problems. One forgets daily anxieties to some extent through being rapt in attention to an artificial world or some usually unnoticed aspect of nature. This tends to release perception and imagination for a more compliant, extensive, emotionally sensitive play over the whole presented stimulus, instead of being rigidly held down to the details more relevant to a special problem in mind. It tends to intensify one's awareness of sensory qualities and forms, and one's conative-emotional responses to them.

Such experiences, whether pleasant or unpleasant, often involve inner tension and a desire to express one's feelings in words and otherwise; perhaps to communicate and share them with others, and to describe them afterward in retrospect. "Beautiful," "ugly," "sublime," "pretty," "bizarre," "shocking," "seductive," "grotesque," "lovely," and "inspiring" are but a few of the epithets which language has devised to express such feelings in terms of affects, attributed to objects and predicated of them in discourse. It is no "pathetic fallacy" for a poet to impute his own feeling of loneliness to the last rose of summer; it is a normal process of emotional projection developed into a sustained, romantic flight of fancy. But it would be a fallacy for him to believe the rose actually capable of such feeling, or objectively lonely to the same extent that it is withered and alone.

Critical insight, developed through experience of life and scientific, especially psychological, education makes us realize the "subjective" factor in these feelings; that A may feel a story as in shockingly bad taste while B feels it as mildly amusing. The same is true of "beautiful" and "ugly." Persons of strongly analytical, self-conscious disposition tend to restrain free projection of their affec-

tive responses; not to let themselves feel the object as intensely beautiful or ugly, lovable or hateful; to guard against passion and illusion. The result can be good from the standpoint of factual truth and realism, but bad in chilling all aesthetic and other emotional experience—love as well as hate, joy and enthusiasm as well as painful disillusion. Poetry is sacrificed to a literal truth which may not be worth the price. Extreme fear of illusion and emotional release may become neurotic.

It is also neurotic, and psychotic in extreme forms, to suppose oneself to be independent of outside objects for one's happiness and other emotional life. To be too dependent on outer things and persons is a weakness, and so is utter indifference to them. The shut-in personality turns its back on the world, to contemplate its lovely visions; but they turn too often into nightmares and gloomy emptiness. Beauty and happiness usually require suitable outer objects, and suitable minds to appreciate them. That the experience of beauty is mental and emotional does not preclude the fact that externally perceptible forms are usually necessary for it. Herein lies the partial truth of objectivism in aesthetics, and of objectivist definitions of beauty.

This truth can be expressed within the framework of scientific empiricism. One can distinguish between (*a*) the process, response, or experience of feeling emotionally toward a perceived object; (*b*) the affect or tertiary quality projected upon the object as a part of the total response; (*c*) the object as experienced both perceptually and affectively, as, for example, both blonde and charming, curvaceous and seductive at the same time; and (*d*) the same object as coldly, unemotionally perceived, as blonde and curved but neither charming nor the opposite—without any strongly felt tertiary quality. (Experience usually has at least a slight affective tone of some kind.) To the susceptible youth, the girl not only seems but is beautiful, in the sense that he actually experiences her as such. His illusion, if any, is in thinking that she is so in a purely objective way, for all observers or independently of all observers. The boy's sober, prudent parent, let us say, does not actually feel her beauty as a vivid, overpowering emotional quality. Nevertheless, through his knowledge of life, he perceives that she has "what it takes" to arouse a sense of beauty in a susceptible youth; the *id quod* or "that which" can arouse pleased admiration in some or most humans.

5. Subjective and objective phases in aesthetic experience

The distinction here is somewhat analogous to that between nutrition as a physiological process and the quality of "nutritiousness" or wholesomeness which we attribute to foods. Such a quality is not wholly and independently "in the food," but is imputed to certain foods by virtue of their power to nourish certain types of organism. It is not purely subjective, in the organism independently. It is an abstract potency or tendency observed in their interaction. It is relative to the type of individual and the circumstances; what is one man's meat is another's poison, or perhaps the same man's poison when he is sick. *That which,* in a food, helps to give it nutritive power for certain people can now be described with increasing detail in terms of biochemical formulas, proteins, vitamins, and the like. Nutritiousness does not consist, however, in any intrinsic properties of the food; it consists in the relation between such properties and the body-building needs of certain organisms. Apart from the aesthetic needs of conscious organisms, no trait or type of perceptible objects would be felt as beautiful or aesthetically valuable. Given those needs, certain traits in the object become potentially beautiful or calligenic, capable of arousing an experience of beauty. The experience of nutrition or of beauty becomes actual when such needs are in fact satisfied.

Science now knows a good deal about what makes certain substances nutritious and others poisonous, not only to most normal people, but to special types such as infants, diabetics, and normal persons in a temporary state of fatigue or nervous tension. It can predict with some reliability what the effect will be of eating substance *X,* on a person of type *Y,* under specified circumstances *Z.* It has hardly begun the systematic, empirical, experimental study of what types of perceptual form and quality will stimulate an experience of beauty, or any other type of aesthetic response, in persons of a given type under given circumstances.[11] The preconcep-

[11] The possibility of such a scientific approach to aesthetics is ignored by such belated traditionalists as H. Osborne. He writes in *Theory of Beauty* (London, 1952) that empirical psychology "reduces beauty to subjective reaction and thus rejects the possibility of an independent science of aesthetics" (p. 201). To this

tions, aims, and methods of traditional aesthetics "from above" were foreign to any such investigation. The whole discussion of beauty has been approached in a spirit of dogmatic assertion and evaluation rather than of open-minded interest in learning the facts of art and aesthetic experience, or in basing evaluation on such tested knowledge.

The *id quod* or objective, perceptual determinant of beauty as an experience consists largely in certain types and formal combinations of sensory quality and meaning. They need not be directly sensed or presented at the time; they may be suggested by the presented stimuli and contemplated in imagination. Thus a poem, read in a book, is felt as beautiful for the meanings, images, and ideas, including word-sound patterns, which it calls to mind. A woman or a statue of one may be felt as beautiful, not only for shape and coloring, but for the images of health, graceful movement, tenderness, amiability, and the like which these visual qualities suggest. Music is likewise felt as beautiful for its suggested moods and images as well as for its purely auditory qualities and forms.

The concept of perception was once so broad as to include the contemplation of an inner, mental image, as in a dream; also the understanding of abstract principles. Now it is usually restricted to direct acquaintance with an external object by means of the senses. (The object can also be within the body, as in a muscular pain.) "Perception" differs from mere "sensation" in including an understanding or interpretation of what one senses; for example, in recognizing that an object seen is a statue in front of one, or that a sound is the sound of a violin from above. It thus includes some apprehension of meanings. A dog or a baby can see a picture, but not perceive it as fully as adults do. The latter can understand not only what it represents but also what it symbolizes, as in the cross as a sign of Christianity. In reading a poem, attention is usually paid more to the meanings of the printed words than to their visual shape and color, except in the case of calligraphy or ornamental type. "Apperception" is perhaps a better name than "perception" for the total process when the interpretation of meanings and forms

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it can be answered that no science is completely independent. Scientific aesthetics involves a study of the forms and effects of art, as well as of "subjective reactions."

thus constitutes a more important part of the whole. Some of the images and ideas which a work of art suggests to suitably educated readers are established in cultural usage, such as the dictionary meanings and well-known historical associations of the words. These can be apperceived as comparatively integral parts of the poem or picture as an objective form. In this sense, the conception of Helen as beautiful is an objective part of the *Iliad;* one of its socially established meanings or constituent ideas.

On the other hand, the personal, peculiar associations and reflections of a reader *toward* the poem are not objective parts of its form. His feeling that the *Iliad* is beautiful, sublime, or tedious is not a part of the form, but an extrinsic, affective quality which he attributes to it. The beauty of Helen is *in* the *Iliad,* to the same extent as the strength of Achilles or the events of the siege. The beauty which any reader, or readers generally, attribute to the *Iliad* is not as much a part of it. It is an integral part of the total response of some readers, of their aesthetic experience in reading it. But it can be detached in theory and in practice; some may read the poem with a different emotional attitude, or in a dry, analytical way. Likewise one may recognize that a smiling face in a picture suggests or expresses joy and pleasure, without feeling any such emotion toward it.

The phenomena to which the name "beauty" has traditionally been assigned can be classed under two main psychological headings: (a) certain types of projected affect or tertiary quality, and (b) certain types of appercept or of secondary (sensory) qualities and established meanings which tend to stimulate such affects in some persons. The tertiary quality and its objective cause or referent are two different things psychologically. The latter is largely perceptive or apperceptive, the former largely conative-emotional. Difficulty arises from the fact that they are so intimately blended in experience. Neither in practice nor in theory have they been clearly distinguished; both are called "beautiful" in particular cases, and in abstraction, "beauty." But the vague and partial distinction between them has given rise to two main ways of conceiving and defining "beauty," one subjective and the other objective in emphasis.

Neither of these types of quality is purely objective in the metaphysical or epistemological sense; both are phases of human ex-

perience, and in this broad sense are subjective or intersubjective phenomena. From the empiricist standpoint, neither is a Platonic, absolute Idea, existing eternally, independent of the human mind. But within the general framework of human experience some phenomena are commonly regarded as more subjective than others in various ways. Those pertaining to the inner life of dreams and thoughts, feelings and emotions, which are not directly observable from the outside, are so regarded by contrast with overt behavior and expression. When an individual's thoughts and interests are largely introverted, focused on some fantasy or inner meditation, his experience is said to be more subjective than when directed toward outer objects. The inner mechanisms, abilities, desires, tastes, and attitudes which help determine an aesthetic response are all relatively subjective in this sense; so is the response itself as an inner experience. The work of art and its physical and social context are more objective.

Percepts as well as affects are in part projections of human experience; a thing is no more red or sweet in itself than charming or delicious in itself. Whatever may be the ultimate, independent properties of matter, they are not identical with the way it affects human sense organs, desires, and emotions. But percepts are regarded as somewhat more objective than affects, in being more susceptible to social observation and corroboration by different observers under controlled conditions. They seem to be less variable, less dependent on the whole mood and attitude of the individual, than are affects. They are by no means free from personal bias and expectation. Often people agree more on the affective or tertiary qualities of things than on their secondary qualities and cultural meanings. But on the whole the former seem to be more volatile, more susceptible to wide swings from one extreme to another, as a result of variable factors in the personality and circumstances such as education, tastes, and present attitudes. On the whole, it is more possible to predict what will seem light or dark, round or square, loud or soft, high or low in pitch to a group of observers chosen at random than what will seem agreeable or disagreeable. Hence a description of the sensory and formal qualities of a work of art is regarded, for practical purposes, as somewhat more objective than one in terms of affective or evaluative qualities.

6. Corresponding approaches to aesthetics: psychological and sociological; morphological and art-historical; evaluative

In analyzing the total interaction which constitutes aesthetic experience, some theorists stress the more subjective, inner, affective, personal factors in it; some, the more objective, outwardly perceptible factors in it. In defining and explaining "beauty," some stress the nature of the response or inner experience involved; some, the nature of the stimulus or outer object which arouses it and toward which it is consciously directed. These two emphases are not necessarily contradictory, although they become so when extreme. In moderate form they are supplementary, throwing light on different aspects of the same process.

To stress the *affective response or experience* of beauty shows a predominantly psychological interest and approach. One tends to conceive of beauty in a more "subjective" way, in terms of pleasure, admiration, unified and harmonious play of impulses without ulterior purpose, or the like. This approach has been productive in the psychology and sociology of aesthetics, and can be more so in the future. It leads to the exploration of the nature and varieties of aesthetic experience on both conscious and unconscious levels; to the study of individual and group tastes and value-systems in the aesthetic realm; of the ways in which images take on varying emotive power for individuals and groups as conscious and unconscious symbols; of the genesis of aesthetic likes and dislikes in the growing individual under cultural influence; of the relation between aesthetic tastes and the dynamic structure of personality as a progressive conditioning and redirecting of innate desires and predispositions. Students in this realm tend to be more interested in people and their behavior, including artists and consumers of art, than in works of art as finished, self-sufficient products. Their studies often suffer from insufficient knowledge of the works of art in which artists express their personal and cultural strivings, and which stimulate and influence consumers. Too often they are content with artificially contrived, oversimplified laboratory situations and diagrams such as the "golden section," which inadequately represent the complexities of art, as tests and objects for aesthetic evaluation.

The psychological approach can also be applied to a study of perception and perceptual qualities. In principle, it might lead the psychologist to a study of works of art as object-stimuli of perception, and as manifesting perceptual qualities or endowed with these by the percipient. A few but not many psychologists have followed this promising line of research—again, often because their scientific education has not included much study of the arts.

Philosophers and some psychologists, especially of the literary type, are not content to describe and analyze experience; they also evaluate it. Often in vague, traditional terms whose psychological reference is hazy, they express strong praise and approval for some kinds of aesthetic experience, disparagement for others. Most writers on aesthetics or other branches of philosophy are inclined toward serious, intellectual, quiet, somewhat austere tastes and moral standards; otherwise they would follow a livelier calling. Some are more ascetic than others, however. All such attitudes and moral standards find expression in definitions and theories of beauty and aesthetic value. For the classicist, the best kind of aesthetic experience involves the classical virtues of balance, repose, restraint, order, unity, rationality, etc. Hence, for him, the *true* experience of beauty involves these virtues. (See the definitions above cited by Dewey and by Ogden, Richards, and Wood.) Ethel D. Puffer asserts, in *Psychology of Beauty:* [12] "The Nature of Beauty is in the relation of means to an end; . . . the end, a moment of perfection, of self-complete unity of experience, of favorable stimulation with repose . . . . The beauty of an object lies in its permanent possibility of creating the perfect moment."

For the classicist, and still more for the Christian ascetic, the distinction between "higher" and "lower" pleasures is all-important. Spiritual, moral, and intellectual pleasures are the highest, including the use of art for such purposes; sensuous pleasures are the lowest, especially those of the "lower" senses, but also those of sight and hearing for their own sake. For the ascetic, the true experience of beauty is freed or purified from all sexual or other selfish or mercenary desire to possess the object or anything suggested by it (as in a picture of a beautiful woman), or to use the object as a means to such gratification.

Controversial moral judgments of this sort can, as we have seen,

[12] Cambridge, Mass., 1905, p. 56.

be expressed either in the basic definition of "beauty" or, with a more neutral definition, in supplementary propositions about the relative merits and demerits of different kinds of beauty in experience and its objects. To include them in the definition tends to make it unacceptable to persons of different beliefs. In more moderate form, however, the idea of relative freedom from practical planning and effort is a differentia of all aesthetic experience. It can be specified as a distinctive trait of the experience of beauty without implying that sexual or selfish desire for the object is necessarily bad or inconsistent with the appreciation of art.

For a romanticist, the highest aesthetic experience and hence the true sense of beauty must involve the typical romantic virtues of freedom, spontaneity, playfulness, variety, change, vigor of will and emotion, perhaps a little strangeness and excess. If an experience is otherwise, it is not "really" an experience of beauty. Strangeness as a trait of beauty is also a baroque idea, as expressed in Bacon's essay on "Beauty."

A special interest in the *works of art* and other objects which are felt as beautiful has led to scholarly and scientific study of the forms of art, their structure and varieties. Chronologically organized, this leads to books on the history of the arts, singly and as factors in cultural history. Theoretically organized, it leads to books on aesthetic morphology, on the descriptive analysis of form and style in all the arts. Focused on particular works and artists, it becomes a type of criticism, often stressing understanding rather than evaluation. In the early stages of art-historical scholarship, as in Winckelmann's Greek studies, the concept of the beautiful was prominent. Scholars were interested in Greek sculpture and architecture as outstanding examples of "that which" manifested beauty; they were interested in general traits and principles of style as rules or laws of beauty. That ideal inspired their studies as the quest for an elixir of youth inspired sixteenth-century explorers. But in both, the original goal faded out of men's thoughts in favor of others, and even came to seem an irrelevant distraction. As *Kunstwissenschaft* developed, "beauty" faded out of its vocabulary, to be replaced by "form" and "style." Art was interesting, not merely as *id quod visum placet,* in any sense of these words, but for many other reasons: notably, as a varied expression of the human mind in various cultural developments.

As in regard to the *experience* of beauty, the moral and aesthetic attitudes of philosophers were expressed in their various conceptions of beauty *in the object;* of what perceptual qualities in art were really beautiful in the highest sense, as opposed to the low and specious ones. Here we find, in the eighteenth century and later, several stages in opinion: first, the naïve assumption that Greek, especially late Greek, canons of style are equivalent to the laws of beauty in general; second, a growing distinction between such Greek or classical beauty and other, inferior kinds; third, the gradual recognition that Gothic, Byzantine, Egyptian, Chinese, and other kinds of beauty are perhaps as good in their own way as the Greek; fourth, the abandonment of all evaluative terms like "beauty" in describing them, and the rise of a consciously "objective" *Kunstwissenschaft,* historical and morphological.

The two approaches, psychological and morphological, must be combined for a thorough empirical study of aesthetic evaluation. This can be done only partly in terms of "beauty." One can try to find out, through observation and experiment, what kinds of art and other object, what perceptual qualities and combinations of them are called "beautiful" by various types of person, under various conditions. But this encounters two serious limitations. First, because of the ambiguity of "beauty," different observers apply it in different senses; calling something "beautiful" does not necessarily indicate the same experience. Second, in any specific sense of the word, "beauty" is now only one of many kinds of experience and quality whose nature and value we wish to consider. It is only one of the qualities now sought in art, and not always the most desired.

7. *The determinants of aesthetic experience and of its values*

An aesthetic response or experience (*R*) is always the joint resultant of three main groups of determining factors: the nature of the object (*O*), the nature of the subject or percipient (*S*), and the nature of the circumstances (*C*). *O* includes all that is directly perceptible or understandable in the object; its presented and suggested qualities, including culturally established meanings, and their formal arrangement in spatial, temporal, causal, and other modes of organization. It does *not* include affects or evaluative

qualities, such as beauty, felt by *S* and attributed to the object. These are part of the response. However, *O* may include suggestions of tertiary qualities as established meanings, as of the word "beauty" in a poem. *S* includes the percipient's stable, permanent, or slowly changing traits such as sex, physique, intelligence, personality structure, stage of maturation, special aptitudes, and education; also his transitory, rapidly changing traits such as mood, interest, and activity of the moment.

C includes the circumstances surrounding the interaction: the immediate physical setting in which the object is seen or heard; the persons present and the other perceptible stimuli; also the general physical and cultural environment, as of twentieth-century Paris or a medieval manor. Current trends in style and taste are among the circumstances. The circumstances operate, in part, through affecting the temporary nature of the subject or percipient. His general physical and cultural environment has already helped to form his stable personality, tastes, and abilities. The immediate situation in which his response takes place helps to influence his mood and attitude: whether he is listening to music in church or in a concert hall; whether he is looking at primitive sculpture in a museum or in a village of equatorial Africa, surrounded by dancing warriors. Circumstances also help to affect the nature of the work of art as a stimulus to perception. A statue or painting is seldom alone in the field of vision; it has a background, whether of a Greek temple or an artist's studio. The lighting, the neighboring objects, and the observer's point of view all affect its visible form and qualities.

The response or particular experience is a modification of the previous flow of activity and experience—overt and internal, conscious and unconscious—which the percipient has been carrying on. It involves a partial redirection of attention and interest toward the object, with more or less ignoring of other thoughts and present stimuli.

The interaction of all three determinants in a particular case produces a response or experience. This can be symbolized by the formula $OSC \rightarrow R$. Theoretically, a knowledge of *O*, *S*, and *C* would enable one to predict the outcome, the specific experience (R^1), whether of pleased admiration or otherwise. Many of the factors are hard or impossible to ascertain in a particular case; but large numbers of people make their living by predicting and

managing correctly in regard to groups and types of observer, such as the type of dance music, story, and film which will be preferred by most urban adolescents in a given year. If any particular kind of R (R^1 or R^2, etc.) is desired and adopted as a goal or standard of value, then specific kinds of O, such as a certain type and style of art, become potential means to that end, to be determined in relation to the kinds of S and C which will probably be involved. Traits and types of O are regarded as instrumentally good or valuable in relation to the codeterminants S and C, and to the end, R^1. If R^1 is conceived as the experience or quality of beauty, such traits of O are part of *that which* produces it.

Popular thinking often errs here in ignoring the roles of S and C in the joint result; also in failing to distinguish between the "objective" or perceptual traits of O and the R^1 affects which S attributes to it, in feeling it as beautiful. Past aesthetics has erred in assuming only one kind of R (or a very few kinds) to be desirable in the experience of art, whereas modern taste demands a great variety.

Hence the evaluation of art and of aesthetic experience is now performed less and less in terms of "beauty" alone, and more pluralistically, in terms of a great variety of specific ends and standards. All can, from the humanistic standpoint, be summarized in the single aim of *good experience* in this life. But emphasis is now placed more on the diversity of good experience, on the danger of trying to reduce or limit it to any one narrow, fixed type, especially an ascetic one; on the desirability of freedom to experiment in art and taste, so that each may achieve, through the enjoyment of classical beauty or otherwise, the kinds of good experience through art of which he is most capable.

The object-stimulus (O) includes the whole of the work of art or other main focus of attention. It includes its established meanings in the culture in which it operates, as well as its presented, sensory qualities, all as ingredients in a more or less unified form which, as the object of aesthetic experience, becomes an aesthetic form. The meanings suggested by or attributed to the presented stimuli change and vary somewhat in relation to the cultural setting. They overlap the general environment or circumstances in which the experience occurs, so that no sharp line can be drawn between them.

No single trait or small set of traits in a work of art should be identified with the form or object as a whole. What we single out in

critical analysis as the trait of unity or disunity, harmony or conflict, repose or unrest, may involve certain details or the arrangement of the whole, but it is never a complete description of the whole. Any part or single, abstract quality functions within a context of other parts and qualities in the total form, which we may call its *formal context.* Its perceptual, suggestive, and aesthetic effects vary in relation to its position in such a context. A spot of red seems different as surrounded by yellows or by blues. The conflict between Montagues and Capulets is a constituent phase in *Romeo and Juliet;* the ugliness of Socrates, as compared to a satyr, is a detail in the *Symposium.* Both would be different in other formal contexts. A pervasive quality of tight, rigid, geometrical unity may affect us one way if it occurs in an Egyptian pyramid, a Doric temple, or the formal garden of a Renaissance palazzo; another way if it occurs in the normally romantic, picturesque garden of an English cottage. Certain traits are accepted as appropriate, consistent, and harmonious in works of one style of art which would seem out of place in others.

What will be the aesthetic effect of any constituent trait such as "unity" in the object, whether it will be felt as beautiful, tedious, or otherwise, thus depends on its relation to other factors *within the object itself,* as well as on the relation of the object as a whole to the percipient and circumstances. Analysis of *S* or *C* in any given case will likewise reveal it to be not a single factor, but a shifting complex of interacting factors which defies complete, analytical description. The wonder is that people succeed as well as they do, by rough total estimates and rule-of-thumb guesses, in understanding and predicting aesthetic effects. This is because the factors involved, though diverse and variable, are not completely so. They run true to type in many respects, and experience helps us to predict their behavior with some success. It is not a hopeless task for science to try to learn more about these variables and the partial recurrences in their interaction. But the complex relativity of aesthetic experience should prevent us from assuming casually that any particular trait in the object will necessarily produce an analogous trait in the aesthetic response. Unity and repose in the work of art may tend, when accompanied by a certain formal context and by certain *S* and *C* factors, to produce an effect on the beholder of emotional conflict and irritation. The nature of such

tendencies can be discovered and controlled only by empirical experiment. It is a common oversimplification in experience, and also in aesthetic theory, to regard some single trait or set of traits as *that which* produces the aesthetic effect. As we have seen, it can be only one of many different codeterminants.

8. Expressive and critical terms

Modern psychology, aided by the literary psychology of poets, dramatists, and novelists, is distinguishing innumerable varieties and blends of aesthetic and other conative-emotional experience. It is striving to correlate these with verbal names and phrases capable of indicating such subtle nuances. Where the half-dozen or so traditional aesthetic categories—sublime, beautiful, pretty, comic, tragic, and the rest—sufficed for early theory, now a huge, finely discriminative terminology is required.

Among the great variety of responses and tertiary qualities thus distinguished, some can, by stretching the concept, be described as varieties of beauty. Thus Walter Pater attributes a late and decadent, romantic beauty to the *Mona Lisa:* "It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity, and how would they be troubled by this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies has passed? All the thoughts and experience of the world have etched and molded there in that which they have of power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the reverie of the Middle Ages with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias. She is older than the rocks among which she sits . . . ." [13] But it becomes increasingly hard to force all this new wine into a few old bottles, and critics tend to evaluate art in other terms. Roger Fry's essay on "Negro Sculpture" [14] lauds it to the skies without mentioning "beauty" or "beautiful." Primitive Negro sculpture is "greater than anything we produced even in the Middle Ages"; it

[13] *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (London, 1873).

[14] *Vision and Design* (New York, n.d.). The essay first appeared in 1920.

has "complete plastic freedom," with "form in three dimensions." Its forms suggest "an inner life of their own" and show "exquisite taste in handling material," with "subtle refinement in elaborating the surface."

9. A revised set of definitions for "beauty"

The problem of nomenclature and of definition now appears as follows: given a great variety of aesthetic responses, tertiary qualities, perceptible forms and styles in art, to which of them can the names "beauty" and "beautiful" be most usefully applied? One is tempted here to be arbitrary, and to pick out a single type of quality as most worthy of the name, urging that everyone henceforth use the name in that sense and no other. But experience has shown the futility of such attempts in the case of "beauty"; too many different meanings are deeply entrenched. With more hope of success, one may attempt the modest task of restating the chief current meanings [15] in terms of naturalistic psychology, and rearranging them so that the alternative senses will be clear. Recommendations will then be made as to the choice of meanings for technical use in aesthetics.

I. An unabridged dictionary or philosophic word-book, in defining "beauty," should first list its etymology and approximate synonyms in the native and foreign languages, such as *beauté, Schönheit;* charming, lovely, pleasing to the sight, admirable for sensory and formal qualities or, by extension, for intellectual or moral ones, etc.

[15] Some useful sources for this purpose, in addition to the standard dictionaries of English and French, are as follows: "Beauty" in *Encyclopedia of the Arts* (New York, 1946) and in *Dictionary of World Literature* (New York, 1942). Index references to "Beauty" in K. E. Gilbert and H. Kuhn, *History of Esthetics* (Bloomington, Ind., 1953); in H. M. Kallen, *Art and Freedom* (New York, 1942); Lord Listowel, *A Critical History of Modern Aesthetics* (London, 1933), p. 265; C. J. Ducasse, *The Philosophy of Art* (New York, 1929), Ch. XIV; B. C. Heyl, *New Bearings on Esthetics and Art Criticism* (New Haven, Conn., 1943), p. 23f.; H. Mead, *Introduction to Aesthetics* (New York, 1952), p. 65; A. L. Hilliard, *The Forms of Value* (New York, 1950), Ch. V; R. B. Perry, *Realms of Value* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), p. 333f.

II. Special usages and shades of meaning in the native language should be noted, with reference to various contexts: for example, that in English a man is usually not called "beautiful" but "handsome"; that a pleasing gustatory stimulus is called "delicious" and an olfactory one "fragrant," not "beautiful." That, by extension, an act of courage or self-sacrifice or a piece of scientific reasoning is sometimes called "beautiful."

III. *Technical senses in the field of aesthetics* should then be listed; first, those employed in influential past writings, as in (1) Platonic theory; (2) Neo-Platonic theory; (3) Thomist (Scholastic and Neo-Scholastic) theory; (4) Kantian theory; (5) eighteenth-century hedonism; (6) Crocean theory. These are abundantly set forth in the various histories of aesthetics by Knight, Bosanquet, Gilbert and Kuhn, and others, and need no restatement here. Listing them as usages of the term and as beliefs about the nature of beauty, a dictionary need pronounce no judgment of its own on their truth or validity, but may properly report current tendencies in opinion as well as in verbal usage. In view of the tendency toward naturalistic empiricism in recent thought, its conceptions of beauty may properly receive increasing emphasis, but they should still be listed as theories, not established facts.

IV. *Technical aesthetic senses in empiricist and naturalist theories:*

A. *Subjective or experiential senses,* referring to the nature of the affective response.

1. *General subjective sense:* beauty is an affect or conative-emotional quality, attributed to an object of visual or auditory perception or of thought, in which the object is experienced as pleasing and admirable for its directly presented or suggested sense-qualities, meanings, and forms, rather than for any other uses, effects, inferences, facts, or values to which it may be related.

2. *Specific subjective senses; types of beauty as experience.*

a. *Classical or Apollonian:* beauty is such a projected affect or quality when the experience involves unity, order, repose, balance, harmony, restraint, proportion, rationality, and the like.

b. *Romantic or Dionysian:* beauty is such a projected affect or quality when the experience involves variety, change, freedom, playfulness, vigor of impulse and emotion, and perhaps some irregularity, disorder, strangeness, excess, and mystery.

c. *Other* specific senses or types of beauty as experience.

B. *Objective or formal senses,* referring to that which, in a work of art or other object, tends to stimulate such a response.

1. *General objective sense:* beauty is a combination of presented and suggested sensory qualities, meanings, and forms in an object of visual or auditory perception or of thought, which tends to stimulate pleased admiration as directly contemplated rather than as an end or means in practical effort, planning, or inquiry.

2. *Specific objective senses:* beauty as a style of art or set of stylistic traits.

a. *Classical or Apollonian:* beauty is such a combination of traits (as described in B1) when also involving unity, order, repose, balance, harmony, fitness, restraint, proportion, rationality, perfection, flawlessness, and the like.

b. *Romantic or Dionysian:* the same, when involving variety, change, freedom, playfulness, vigor of impulse and emotion, irregularity, strangeness, and the like.

c. *Other* specific senses or types of beauty as a trait or power of the object; other styles of art.

All these senses of "beauty" are established in aesthetics and criticism, but are often expressed in words which seem vague or misleading psychologically. Ruskin, in "The True and the Beautiful," was approximating sense B1, the broad objective sense, when he said, "Any material object which can give us pleasure in the simple contemplation of its outward qualities, without any direct and definite exertion of the intellect, I call in some way, or in some degree, beautiful." But can a poem be beautiful in this way? Webster's *New International Dictionary* gives another version of this sense in defining beauty as "that which provokes immediate and disinterested pleasure in a subject; that which is beautiful as determined by subjective awareness and reactions such as delightful sensation, moral exaltation, reverie, etc." Emerson gave a personal

variant of sense B2a, the classical objective, when he said, "We ascribe beauty to that which is simple, which has no superfluous parts, which exactly answers its end." But are all such things beautiful?

There is no great harm in using the term in any of these established senses if the context indicates which is meant. But the present tendency is to express the more specific senses, such as the Greek canons of art, otherwise than as types of beauty; that is, as styles of art or psychological types of experience. This leaves the broader senses of "beauty" preferable today. Throughout its history, it has been predominantly a broad, vague term to express admiration for a visible or other object. There is still need of such a term. "Beauty" is probably best left so, with only a slight attempt at greater precision.

10. Errors to be avoided in discussing beauty

Errors and confusions of thought arise in applying the term when we shift carelessly from one sense of it to another, assuming that what is true of "beauty" in one sense is true of it in another. They arise also from unwarranted assumptions about the nature and value of the things concerned. Let us summarize a few of them.

It is false from the standpoint of scientific naturalism, as we have seen, to assume that any one of these senses, or any other conceivable meaning, is *the* only real, true meaning of "beauty," or defines its nature in the only correct way. As to the "formal or objective senses," it is false to assume that beauty of this kind is purely, metaphysically objective; that it exists independently of human experience. It is equally false to assume that beauty in the experiential sense is "purely subjective," a completely free, unique, individual, inwardly determined, capricious feeling, independent of the nature of outer objects.

As to the specific experiential senses, there is no ground for assuming that any particular way of experiencing beauty is the right or superior way, or better than other ways. One cannot assume *a priori* that aesthetic experience is better than practical experience, or is better when free of active desire—erotic or otherwise—than when it is not. One cannot assume that it is necessarily better when highly unified and reposeful. These are debatable hypotheses in

ethics and aesthetics and can best be fought out otherwise than in definitions of "beauty."

As to the broad formal or objective sense, one should not assume that there is any one kind of object or perceptible form which always and necessarily gives aesthetic pleasure, is "intrinsically pleasing," arouses the feeling of beauty, or should do so. This is a psychological problem to be answered empirically, as to what kinds of object do so for what kinds of person under what circumstances. It is not enough to assert dogmatically that beauty (in the broad experiential sense) "consists in" this or that set of objective traits or established rules and principles of art. One has no right to assume that any particular kind of form or object, or style in art, is inherently more beautiful than others; that it should be admired or felt as beautiful, or is so felt by persons of superior taste; that art should try to embody such traits, or is best when it does. All such theories need explicit justification, and an arbitrary definition of beauty as implying them does not provide it.

To call something or someone beautiful is ordinarily understood as a term of praise (unless meant sarcastically, as in calling a young man "beautiful" to suggest that he is effeminate). To say, "*X* is beautiful" in the broad experiential sense, is usually taken as a complete evaluation of it from the aesthetic point of view. One's pleased admiration of it is not only a tribute to its value, but the ground of that value itself from a hedonistic standpoint; the object is valued as the source of one's pleasant experience. Such aesthetic merit may be outweighed by other considerations, as in St. Anthony's rejection of his beautiful visions as immoral; or by a prudent hedonism, as in tearing oneself away from a novel when it is time to earn some money. To say, "*X* is beautiful to me" implies a cautious relativism, avoiding general evaluation. It can be taken as a limited evaluation or as a descriptive account of a psychological fact, a statement of how the object appears to me, as endowed with certain tertiary qualities.

One may call *X* beautiful in the broad objective sense without actually feeling it to be beautiful and without intent to praise it. A wife who thus recognizes her rival as having "what it takes" to arouse pleased admiration in her husband may regard the other woman with mingled hate, fear, and unwilling respect. Usually, however, we assume that power to attract pleased admiration is a

good thing, in nature and in art; it adds to the joy of life. One may attribute such potency to a style of art for which one feels little personal attraction; one simply recognizes its appeal for many others, in a loose, indefinite way. Likewise, one may roughly assert that beefsteak is nutritious, while knowing well that it is not so for everyone—for babies, some invalids, and normal adults in an overexcited state. Such an assertion can be truthfully made as a rough, empirical generalization, without implying any absolutistic views about the transcendental objectivity of essences like nutritiousness and beauty. In the former sense, one can state as an empirical fact that Mount Fujiyama or the Parthenon is objectively (or intersubjectively) beautiful, even though one does not personally feel it so. There is some danger, though, of slipping over from this into the unjustified inference that anyone who does not feel it so has poor taste or is blind to "real values."[16] From the fact that X pleases many important persons, it is too easy to infer that it pleases everyone whose opinion really counts, or that it is pleasing and satisfying universally and necessarily. Since the beauty of the Parthenon is in part a cultural phenomenon, it may cease to be beautiful as cultural attitudes change, unless (as may well be) there is something in its form which can appeal to all successive generations. Aesthetics has still to discover in any detailed, systematic way what perceptible traits in objects arouse pleased admiration in all or nearly all humans, thus appealing to some basic, well-nigh universal human mechanism, and which ones appeal only to specific human types or cultural groups and periods.

Beauty can be predicated of an object or type of objects (e.g., a style of art) in this sense as a descriptive fact, a rough generalization about prevailing configurations in human behavior. It is a poor tool for scientific description, however; to predicate it of anything is likely to be taken as a value-judgment, an expression of personal admiration.

11. Beauty as a standard of value

The concept of beauty, in the naturalistic senses listed above, is not necessarily a standard of value. Its basic definition does not involve an assertion of such status. It can be used without evalu-

[16] See, for example, D. W. Prall in *Aesthetic Judgment* (New York, 1929), p. 22.

ative intent merely to indicate or describe a kind of experience or a kind of object capable of arousing such experience. It becomes a standard of value, an end or ideal in art and life, only when treated as such. In the narrow senses of the term, it stands for a kind of experience or a kind of object which is sometimes desired and sometimes not; sometimes used as a rule of art and a measure of aesthetic value, sometimes not. Even in the broader senses, it is not self-evident that the kind of experience indicated is always or necessarily good. Sometimes one wants to produce that kind of experience in oneself or someone else, sometimes a different kind. Accordingly, one may or may not want the kind of perceptual stimulus which tends to arouse it. The tribesmen of Uganda, it is said, tried to make their women ugly through putting wooden disks in their lips, so that enemies would not want to carry them away. A political cartoon may try to arouse hatred and loathing for the person or idea represented rather than pleased admiration for the cartoon itself. One may be so devoted to the experience of beauty as to identify it with all aesthetic value, or even with all value, moral and otherwise. Then the power to produce it through art will seem a complete, sufficient criterion of value in art. In a neo-classic age, one may be so enamored of the classic types of experience and art as to identify them with all value, or all aesthetic value. But all such attitudes and judgments are extrinsic to the basic conception of beauty in the senses here recommended. In particular, one should avoid assuming that beauty, as a name for a certain kind of value in art, is also equivalent to *all* value in art. Any such proposition has to be defended empirically, or at least recognized as a tentative hypothesis, not an *a priori* truth. One cannot simply define "beauty" in a broad evaluative sense as equivalent to all aesthetic value, then dogmatically assert that it "consists in" this and that particular trait of experience or of art.

To be an effective instrument of evaluation, a standard must be *selective* and *acceptable* to the person who uses it. On the whole, the more vague and general it is, the less selective; the less clearly it indicates degrees of preference and ranking among alternative things, conditions, actions, attitudes, or experiences. A very abstract, ambiguous slogan with favorable emotive associations is likely to win at least lip-service from all sorts of person because there is no agreement on just what it means in particular cases; each can interpret it for himself or ignore it in practice. "Virtue," "morality," "right

conduct," and "good behavior" are ethical principles of this sort. "Beauty," as broadly and vaguely defined, is equally so for aesthetics and art criticism. This is true whether we define it by some high-sounding, equally laudatory synonym, such as "perfection of form," or in the broad senses just recommended. Few will protest, as a rule, against having art arouse pleased admiration for its directly perceptible qualities. But how does this guide one in deciding how to create or evaluate art? Different persons admire different things.

As we define or explain the import of a value-concept more precisely, it tends to become more selective in practice as a guide in decision and appraisal. But it may also become less acceptable; it may arouse more antagonism in persons of different tastes and opinions; more refusal to follow its guidance. The difference is not wholly a matter of breadth. Some precise rules, as for banking procedure, arouse little protest because they obstruct no honest person's wishes. Some broad principles, as in political constitutions, are widely acceptable and have been clarified in detail by supplementary court decisions. But many moral and aesthetic rules and standards deal with strong, conflicting desires; the more specific they are, the more they tend to obstruct or disparage someone, and to be felt by some as offensive or repressive. In the specific, objective, classical sense, beauty as a certain kind of symmetry, balance, etc., can sometimes be definitely measured, thus satisfying the ideal of exact science. But in this sense it is unacceptable to persons of nonclassical taste, who refuse to admit it as equivalent to beauty or value in the larger sense. One may accept a goal or standard in a more limited way as appropriate and valid in some kinds of situation, though not in all. If "beauty" is defined very narrowly, as consisting in a few recognizable traits of form or experience, present taste will accept it as a valid aim and standard of good art only under certain limited conditions—for example, in the architecture of a public building where suggestions of classical dignity and conservatism are required. Beauty as an experience involving balance and repose will appeal more to elderly philosophers than to impetuous youth.

The evaluative question of what kinds of form in art are desirable and praiseworthy can no longer, on the basis of a relativistic empiricism, be clearly answered in terms of any single, simple rule or concept. It can be answered in a general way in such vague,

humanistic ideals as good experience, happiness, justice, individual and social well-being and progress. It can be answered more specifically only with reference to the factors involved in a particular situation or type of situation: what kind of immediate response or deferred, indirect result is desired (e.g., an educational or therapeutic one), for what kind of person under what circumstances.

The work of art as a finished product is a means to such a result, aesthetic or otherwise, and can have only instrumental value as such. No work of art is good in itself, or beautiful in itself, but only for its effects on the experience of human beings. Science cannot prove in detail what kinds of effect are best, but can greatly aid in discovering how to secure whatever ones we desire.

Beauty as a combination of objective traits, in works of art or other external stimuli, can be only an instrumental good from the naturalistic standpoint. Such a combination of traits—e.g., of shapes and colors, sounds, or verbal meanings—has potential, instrumental value for humans in so far as it is capable of helping to produce good experience in someone at some time. Such instrumental value becomes actual in so far as it succeeds in doing so, directly or indirectly. Directly, it may do so as a stimulus to good aesthetic experience; indirectly, through helping to change and develop personality in such a way as to become more capable of good experience, and more productive of it in others. Beauty in a person tends to produce good experience in beholders, and this often (though not always) benefits that person through inducing admiration, greater self-esteem, love, and other rewards.

In the broad objective sense, the nature of such traits in a work of art or other stimulus is not specified; they are indicated only as "that which" tends to arouse the experience of beauty. To accept it as a standard is to favor *whatever* seems conducive to such experience rather than others. As such, the concept of beauty has little selective power as an aid to choice and grading among works of art or specific traits of art. It must be supplemented by further knowledge about such variable, relative potencies. In a narrow, objective sense, "beauty" provides a more definite criterion for choosing and grading artistic merit, such as the classical traits of balance and symmetry. Even these, however, are open to very different interpretations. It is a mistake, as we have seen, to accept this criterion on the assumption that such traits will necessarily produce the experi-

ence of beauty. Their specificity makes them inacceptable on this and other grounds to modern taste, which demands a variety of forms including many nonclassical ones.

Beauty as a subjective trait or quality of experience can be regarded as an intrinsic value, though often outweighed by other considerations in a total evaluation. The mere fact of its projection and attribution to objects as a tertiary quality does not, of itself, constitute such beauty as an intrinsic value. The experience of beauty, which involves such projection when intense and vivid, is an intrinsic value only in so far as it is a kind of good experience. It is not the only kind, however, and its relative importance in a total, diversified, good life is a problem for ethics. Different cultures, moral theories, and individuals answer it in different ways.

In the broad, experiential sense, beauty can be made equivalent to all aesthetic value. As such, it has little selective power as an aid to choosing or grading specific aesthetic values. It is selective, however, in so far as it excludes other kinds of value. The extent to which one accepts beauty in this sense as a goal and standard, as compared with one's devotion to other values such as moral virtue, knowledge, and utility, can operate in actual choice and grading. In the narrow experiential senses, beauty is more clearly selective; to accept it as a standard is to favor experiences of the classical type (with unity, repose, etc.) or of some other, and hence to favor types of art which seem conducive to such experience—for oneself if not for others. Again, however, it is less generally acceptable in such senses.

In any sense, the concept of beauty becomes more selective as it is defined or explained in terms of other concepts which, as genus or differentia, help to locate it in experience and nature. To define it in terms of other broad, evaluative concepts such as "perfection" and "flawlessness" seems at first sight a mere tautology. But even such vague concepts have distinctive connotations, and by adding several of them one tends to narrow down the meaning of "beauty." Perfection and flawlessness suggest not merely high or total merit, but a complete or finished state, one of being rather than becoming, with no rough edges or loose ends. As such they are congenial to the Platonic type of classicist, but not to the Dionysian, the romantic, or the modern evolutionist who loves change. It rules out the kind of art (as in some of Michelangelo's and Rodin's sculpture) which

intentionally leaves unfinished parts to suggest the never-ending human struggle of man to realize ideals and impose his will on matter. Still more, it condemns the kind of flaw which is not mere intentional roughness but a positive error, fault, or failure. But even this kind can be cherished by the modern romantic or realist in life and art; it makes one feel comfortably superior, or at least not too inferior. To err is human; we enjoy little faults and limitations in our friends. They should be "not too bright and good for human nature's daily food." In a work of art, perfection often seems cold and inhuman; "the Grecian cloys us with his perfectness." It leaves nothing to be said, to be further imagined or improved; hence it may fail to stimulate a creative, energetic mind soon bored with passive admiration. Thomas Mann, in *Young Joseph,* speaks of "the vapidness of perfect beauty, which leaves nothing to be forgiven. For the emotions need something to forgive else they turn away in sheer boredom. Nobody but the schoolmaster, with his love of the accepted and formalized, can pay so much honor to mere perfectness as to wax enthusiastic over it."

The concept of beauty becomes still more selective in practice when defined in terms of descriptive, nonevaluative, observable traits, especially those in which differences of degree or amount can be measured. This is true of "symmetry," not in the evaluative sense of "beauty arising from balanced proportions" (Webster), but in the mathematical sense of "correspondence in size, shape, and relative position." In gathering mushrooms, it is more important to know the visible signs of poisonous ones than the chemical and physiological reasons why they are poisonous. It would be more useful in ordinary dealings with art to have recognizable criteria, external signs to indicate the presence of potential value, than to understand the inner nature of beauty. Whether or not the experience of beauty is, as some say, essentially ineffable and indescribable, it is worth while to look for signs and correlates, observable by the senses or by introspection, which may indicate its presence or potential cause.

12. Other aesthetic qualities

Giving a certain name such as "beauty" to certain traits in an object and also to certain apparently analogous traits in the response, we assume that there must be a necessary, invariable causal connection between them. Finding in practice that there is not, we are surprised and baffled.

These facts should be kept in mind in approaching, from new scientific standpoints, such traditional problems as the differentiation of the aesthetic categories. As "beauty" can be defined with emphasis on the subjective or the objective factor, so can all the other affective and evaluative terms, those of aesthetic theory and those of common parlance. Vague and ambiguous as most of them are, their meanings are sure to overlap, however defined; but certain distinctive emphases can be noted within each concept. Established usage gives us clues to these distinctions and precedents for naming them. The name "sublimity" is traditionally applied to certain traits in the object, such as great size and power, and to certain ones in the response, such as awe and elevation of spirit. "Prettiness" is applied to smaller size and weaker, daintier form in the object; to less respectful, more condescendingly amiable feelings, as toward a small child or a flower. The relation of each of these pairs of meanings to those of "beauty" can then be marked off, primarily on the basis of established usage, but with some attempt to clarify the psychological distinctions and connections. Thus objective sublimity and objective prettiness can be regarded as varieties of objective beauty; the experiences of sublimity and of prettiness, as varieties of experiential beauty.[17] But the distinction among varieties of form and of feeling soon becomes so elaborate that more different names are needed to make them clear. Instead of defining them as "varieties" of each other, it will probably seem more expedient to find quite different names, old or new. Moreover, the use of a single name for an object-trait and an experience-trait tends to make us assume an invariable causal connection between them. To some

[17] One of the most elaborate classifications of the "varieties of beauty" is that of J. Volkelt, *System der Aesthetik* (Munich, 1914). Cf. Mather, *op. cit.*, pp. 276f.

extent this is justified; otherwise our ancestors would not have called them by the same name, or failed to distinguish the subjective from the objective phase. But the connection is far from invariable, and they are two different things even when one does produce the other.

Behaviorists in psychology now look with great scorn upon such juggling of names and definitions for what they regard as merely speculative, introspective ideas, and for old-fashioned psychologists, like McDougall, who concerned themselves with classifications of feeling and emotion. The result has been to leave a huge, unacknowledged gap in the behavioristic account of human experience with respect to its more complex, inner, culturally conditioned phases. Extreme behaviorism has practically nothing of importance to say about art or aesthetic experience. Knowledge in this realm can progress only by a judicious use of introspection along with behavioristic data, and along with applied semantics in the development of an adequate descriptive terminology. What the behaviorists overlook is that works of art are as objective and observable in their own way, with suitable techniques, as any other kind of human act or product. The creation or use of art is a kind of behavior; so is the verbal criticism and evaluation of it, and so are the attempts of literature to describe inner feelings in words. Empiricist aesthetics must utilize and synthesize all these sources of knowledge and develop our now crude, inadequate terminology into something better.

IX

AESTHETICS AND THE ARTIST*

Should an artist or prospective artist study aesthetics? What, if anything, can he get from it which will help him in his work? I am often asked this question, especially in advising university students. My usual answer is that it depends on the kind of artist, and the kind of aesthetics. Some artists are disposed by nature and education to like theoretical discussions of art, and to profit from them; others are not. Some kinds of aesthetic theory are relevant to an artist's problems and can help him think them out. Others will probably seem to him tiresome and useless. If these are forced upon him as a student, they may do him more harm than good.

For most art students, there is no great risk in taking a simple, elementary course in aesthetics or the principles of criticism, of the kind which is given in many colleges today; one which conveys a few basic facts about the arts and their place in civilization, together with some of the principal issues and theories of aesthetic value. If properly taught, such a course can stimulate interest in the arts and enrich the student's general background. It is suited to the college or even the advanced secondary level. In France, an introductory course in philosophy, including a brief section on aesthetics, is now given to many students in the *lycée* or secondary school; it is commonly considered as a valuable part of a liberal education. Countless European artists have had such an introduction to philosophy. But we know so little at present about the best education for a creative artist that I would hesitate to require any course on aesthetics of all prospective artists, or to urge that any such student go very far in it unless he feels a strong inclination toward theoretical studies. For some, it may be well to avoid all philosophy, psychology, and other intellectual analysis; especially that which leads the artist to analyze himself and his art, and to plan his work in a highly conscious way. This question will be considered more carefully in the following pages.

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1. Some obstacles to understanding and co-operation

Aesthetics and the practice of the arts have been far apart in the past. They are still far apart in their aims and methods, but are moving a little closer together in some ways. I believe that this rapprochement will continue. The present article will examine some resemblances and differences between the work of the artist and that of the aesthetician: some ways in which their aims and methods diverge and some in which they overlap. By the word "artist" I shall mean a performer, practitioner, or creative producer in any of the arts, including not only painting, sculpture, and architecture, but also literature, music, dance, and theater.

The present development of aesthetics in this country is attracting the attention of more and more artists in various fields. Not a few are writing articles and letters about theoretical problems in the arts. Some ask, what has all this to do with me and my work? Often the answers are negative. An artist happens to read a book or article on aesthetics, or attend a meeting on the subject, and finds it tediously abstract and bookish. He may resent some of the things that are said about artists by college professors. Aestheticians and artists are, on the whole, farther apart in the United States than in Europe, where aesthetics is an older subject and more widely taught. Artists, critics, and philosophers there have had more opportunity to learn about each other, although they work along different lines and often come into conflict. In Paris, some artists attend each meeting of the Society for Aesthetics at the Sorbonne and take a regular part in its discussions. Much theoretical and critical writing in Europe is in close touch with the practice of art, and some of it is done by artists who express themselves well in printed words. In the United States, aesthetics has in the past been more restricted to a small group of speculative philosophers. Until recently the general public, and even the world of art, knew little about it.

More contact between the two groups would seem to be desirable, but how can it be achieved? It is partly a matter of personal acquaintanceship, as in conferences where both groups are represented. But such conferences do not necessarily produce a sympathetic understanding. Differences in educational background, in vocabulary, and in professional attitude may even aggravate sus-

picion and hostility. Basic differences are sometimes complicated by superficial ones of manner and speech, so that each group comes to think of the other as supercilious and egotistic. The artist may accuse the philosopher of trying to "high-hat" him with big words; the philosopher may charge the artist with being emotional, vague, and illogical.

As a subject, aesthetics often seems to the artist as reactionary and repressive, glorifying past academic styles of art and discouraging innovation; it seems to lay down restrictive rules as to what the artist should or should not do; it often seems artificial and remote from life and art; it seems to split hairs interminably over the meaning of "beauty" and other verbal abstractions. However, I would emphasize to the artist that these faults are not characteristic of all modern aesthetics, but only of some rather backward schools of thought within it. Let him look a little harder if he is disappointed at first.

There is a genuine meeting ground between the two groups in their common interest in certain problems. Artists and art students still debate with fervor such perennial questions as whether the artist "has a right" to do this or that in his art; whether painting should represent a natural object or not; how much dissonance is good in music, and whether the composer has a right to violate traditional rules of harmony; whether the government should support the artist; and whether he should deal with social, political, economic, and moral problems in his work. All these are questions of aesthetics as well as of art, but the two groups differ in their ways of dealing with them. Artists like to talk about them, but as a rule not to study them systematically, deeply, and thoroughly. Many would rather express their opinions dogmatically than to follow a long and plodding course of scientific investigation. This attitude is not necessarily bad, but it shows a difference of interest. The aesthetician's interests and abilities are limited in other ways. He usually lacks creative imagination and technical skill in the arts. The two have very different jobs to do, and it is not surprising if their interests often diverge and seem unsympathetic. The aesthetician thinks and talks more in generalizations and abstract concepts; the artist expresses himself more in concrete images and forms. Each could learn to understand the other's language a little more if he wanted to. Leading writers in aesthetics today are urging that it

should be less purely speculative; that it should involve more direct observation of works of art and more acquaintance with the artist's point of view. On the other hand, many educators believe that the majority of art students could profit by a little more theoretical study and by more knowledge of the history and criticism of art; by more training in logical, objective reasoning, instead of relying so much on sudden inspiration and unplanned experimentation.

It is a common mistake of artists to assume that no one can understand art or even discuss it intelligently without having practiced it professionally and developed some technical skill in it. It is a mistake, which some aesthetic theorists have shared, to assume that the appreciation and understanding of art must be a repetition of the artist's own experience in making a work of art. The two types of experience are similar in certain respects, but are very different in others. It has been aptly remarked that, to judge the merits of an egg, one does not need to be a hen. It may be added that one doesn't need to be a hen to study the physiology and biochemistry of an egg. Some practice of an art may be helpful to an aesthetician; but he cannot possibly acquire any considerable technical skill in all the arts. On the other hand, he can acquire a much broader knowledge and appreciation of the arts than most professional artists do. The artist's necessary preoccupation with his medium—with materials and instruments such as paints or violins, and with the technical problems of controlling them—prevents him from spending much time on theory. The latter is a full-time job in itself. In this specialized age, each profession makes its own increasing demands. A practicing artist usually has less time for studying the works of other artists, past and present, than a critic or historian has.

Artists are often intensely partisan in support of the kinds of art they admire, and hostile toward others. This may be a good quality in an artist, for it motivates him to follow his own creative vision. But it does tend to make him less objective and dispassionate than a scientist, historian, or philosopher in the field of art should be.

The value of a work of art to the man who made it is not necessarily the same as its value to the man who sees, hears, or uses it. Many artists mistakenly assume that, because they had an exciting, glorious experience in producing something, it must be equally significant and valuable to others. Playing solitaire can be an absorbing occupation for its devotees; but they cannot expect their

friends to be equally interested in the final arrangement of the cards. Once a work of art is finished and given out to the world, it must (to change the metaphor) sink or swim on its own merits; on its ability to interest, please, or serve total strangers, who care little about its proud parents and the joys or pangs they had in giving it birth.

The experience of perceiving a finished work of art is very different from that of making it. They have certain elements in common, but each has its own problems, its own enjoyments, and often its disappointments. Aesthetic appreciation is not merely a weak, passive imitation of the artist's process, but an active, complex process in its own right, with its own distinctive techniques and values. Criticism is not always the mere grumbling of a disappointed, would-be artist, although it sometimes is. At its best, it is the expression of a powerful and creative mind, such as that of Goethe in his conversations with Eckermann, producing its own intellectual and literary forms. It can be more valuable and more original than the works of art it criticizes, through increasing people's understanding and appreciation of both past and present art. Critics are not always wrong, as the artist likes to believe, especially when he is not being praised. They have done their work badly at times and well at others; some have recognized new genius promptly, and helped the public to reject the false imitations of it which abound in every age.

Aesthetics today is much concerned with helping the critic to do his job better; to be less hidebound, less blind to new values, wiser in his standards, fairer in his judgments. But it cannot advise the critic to go out of business, any more than industry and agriculture can dispense with those who inspect and rate products as grade A, grade B, or defective. Artists are mistaken when they think of critics and theorists as their natural enemies; without these there would be much less demand for art in the world, and less ability to appreciate it. Even when a critic is wrong, he may help to stimulate interest in art by arousing controversy.

2. *Different kinds of artist*

Like other humans, artists can be classified in various ways. The one which is most relevant here is interest and ability in abstract, logical reasoning. In this respect, artists can be arranged between

two extremes. At one is the philosophical artist, who feels at home both in general theory and in the realm of concrete images and forms. He can create in either realm or in a combination of both. He can not only read and learn from aesthetics, but also contribute to it. At the other extreme is the artist dominated by impulse and emotion. He may be sensuous, dreamy, mystical, wilful, capricious, or all of these together. His art proceeds from partly unconscious, spontaneous fantasy, rather than from calm, reflective planning. He has little power or patience to follow or comprehend aesthetic theory, let alone being able to write significantly about it. Artists of this type were encouraged and glorified in the romantic period, but they still exist in considerable numbers. They are partly a result of inborn disposition and partly of special conditioning.

Between these extremes, we may place two intermediate types of personality. One is the artist who is logical in a concrete, practical way. He may think very intelligently about the concrete problems of his own craft and profession; he is not a creature of impulse and emotion. But he has little or no interest in extended, abstract discussion, or ability to follow it. For him aesthetics is of little value. Finally, there is another kind of artist who is mildly interested in theory or can become so, although he lacks the will or ability to think originally along this line. He may like to read occasional books and articles on art criticism, or listen to theoretical discussion; he can follow it and apply it in his work. At the same time, his own creative thinking, though intelligent and logical to some degree, is mostly concrete and practical, dealing with the manipulation of his own medium to produce the desired forms and functions.

Two of these types of artist cannot enjoy or profit much from reading about aesthetics. The other two can profit directly from it, and one of these can play a constructive role in aesthetics itself. The philosophical artist, creative in both art and aesthetics, is rare at present, especially in America.

Many artists, though not philosophers, have expressed themselves significantly on general problems of art and aesthetic experience. They do not, as a rule, work out systematic theories, but they utter detached epigrams and comments about their own and others' work, about art and artists, which can be deeply revealing and illuminating. Vitruvius, the Roman architect and engineer, did produce a systematic treatise on his profession which is still a classic in its

field. Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks are full of profound insights; many of his sentences contain more substance than volumes of pedantic theorizing by lesser men. Milton, Coleridge, Joshua Reynolds, Delacroix, Hugo, Whitman, Richard Wagner, Debussy, and more recently Kandinsky, Klee, and Frank Lloyd Wright, have all expressed themselves in verbal comments about art and life which are highly valuable for aesthetics. They occupy a middle ground between the creation of art and the highly systematic theorizing which constitutes aesthetics. Some, like Milton and Coleridge, can theorize well when they care to do so; others, like Gauguin and Van Gogh, drop occasional brilliant, casual remarks in letters or diaries.

It is the extremely impulsive, visionary type of artist which makes one hesitate to prescribe a course on aesthetics or any other philosophical subject for all art students. There have been many notable artists of the extremely nonlogical type; many who do not and cannot approach their lives with any great amount of planfulness, let alone of general theory; some of them are woefully lacking in practical intelligence and common sense. Nevertheless, they may create works of art which are rated far more highly than the products of ordinary sensible, intellectual minds. Blake, Poe, Verlaine, Rimbaud, and Van Gogh exemplify some of these traits in varying degrees. We know so little about the sources and causes of their inspiration that we cannot at this stage prescribe any specific type of education or training as favorable to their genius. Said Paul Klee, "Impulse is stronger than the mind, and only in the end does the artist see what he intended."

For some artists, then, much study of aesthetics might be not only tedious and incomprehensible, but harmful. The attempt by an artist to think out his aims and methods consciously and abstractly may weaken the force of his creative drives and the vividness of his fantasies. An objective, factual study of himself and the world may destroy the emotional coloring which he projects upon both, and which may be essential to his art.

Our doubts about the education of the impulsive, emotional type of artist must extend far beyond the value of aesthetic theory. It may be best for him to avoid not only aesthetics, but *all* prolonged, systematic instruction in art and all attempt at a balanced, liberal education. In producing reasonable, well-informed, well-adjusted college

graduates with a clear understanding of themselves and the world they live in, we may be destroying some potential geniuses of the emotional, intuitive type. Perhaps this is a good exchange. Some will say that we have enough wild eccentrics and all too few well-balanced, reasonable citizens. But that is another question. Every generation produces some great artists who seem to have no need for the kind of education which ordinary respectable citizens need and want. It is often a hard, lonely road which they must travel. But for such lone wolves, such unique and eccentric personalities, no set scheme of education can be prescribed. We cannot even be sure that what they need is complete freedom to follow their own impulses, or adequate financial support, comfort, and an easy life. Some of them (not all) seem to thrive on bad education, injustice, and lack of appreciation—to be merely goaded by such obstacles into a violent affirmation of their own faith and vision. In short, we do not know what is good for them as artists and what is not.

The amount of theory an artist will need and want is not entirely dependent on his innate, individual temperament. It follows in part from differences among the various arts; from the various media and techniques, and from prevailing attitudes within each art. In part, it is due also to differences in the spirit and style of art at different periods and in different cultural settings. For an artist to choose one art or medium rather than another is itself due partly to innate predisposition and partly to social pressures. He may become a writer partly because he expresses himself well in words and partly because the profession of writing is comparatively well paid and respected in his time and place.

Be that as it may, the literary artist finds it, as a rule, much easier to study and to profit from aesthetics and critical theory than do artists in other media. The men who have distinguished themselves in both art and aesthetics are mostly writers rather than painters, sculptors, or composers. Examples of the philosophical man of letters, or literary philosopher, are Plato, Lucretius, Dante, Rousseau, Goethe, and Emerson in former centuries, and in our own day George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Thomas Mann, T. S. Eliot, George Santayana, Aldous Huxley, Herbert Read, Paul Valéry, and André Malraux. For the man who thinks and creates most easily in verbal symbols, there is often no great gulf between art and aesthetics or other branches of philosophy. He can move continuously

back and forth between the concrete images of poetry, fiction, or drama and the generalizations of philosophical essay-writing. Seldom, however, does he go on to the purely scientific kind of aesthetics; that takes still another type of mind. Many great philosophers write without much literary charm, and never attempt poetry, drama, or fiction. On the other hand, for the painter, sculptor, or composer who is given to creating in nonverbal symbols, there is a tremendous gulf to cross between his own realm and any sustained theoretical writing. He may read the latter, but usually with some feeling of strangeness and impatience; seldom indeed does he make an important contribution to it.

Painters, musicians, and other nonverbal artists are often highly articulate in casual speech. Some love to talk; they gossip, orate, joke, complain, and argue throughout their waking hours. But this is not enough to make them proficient in aesthetics or any other branch of science or philosophy. For that, they must be not only articulate in words but also capable of sustained logical reasoning on abstract subjects, as well as patient and devoted in the quest for systematic knowledge. This is less necessary for the critic, who can be a narrowly passionate partisan and is often at his best when rather dogmatic and personal. But there is a great difference between scientific aesthetics and the ordinary rambling, self-assertive, café-table discussion of art and artists. The former seeks to test its assumptions and conclusions by observation and experiment, and to organize its materials into coherent logical systems.

Architecture, city planning, and some branches of industrial design seem to demand not only a high degree of intelligent planning, but also a considerable knowledge of facts and principles. The architect, as Vitruvius points out, must know something about mathematics and physical science in order to make his buildings firm and durable. In the modern world, he is required to know something also about the applications if not the principles of sociology and economics, in order that his work may be functional and realistically adapted to current conditions. It is hard for him to operate at all in the modern world, if he insists on creating in a purely impulsive, emotional, or dreamy way. To succeed and have his works taken seriously, he must do a good deal of rational planning and have some grasp of theory. On the other hand, painting and sculpture, like music and poetry, *can* be more irrational in

method and in product. They can be devoted largely to the expression of fantasy and sensuous imagery. This is not always or necessarily so, but it frequently happens. It is not necessarily bad when it does. The arts which appeal to individual aesthetic contemplation are on the whole freer from the requirements of practical planning than are the more functional, utilitarian, and socialized arts. It does not follow, of course, that because a work of art gives a dreamy, irrational effect, the artist has been dreamy or irrational in producing it. He may have calculated this effect with the utmost precision. There are many kinds of art and artist, and we must be careful not to generalize in too limited a way. It is clear, however, that some kinds of artist tend to accept and use aesthetics more readily than others, for definite psychological reasons.

As to the part which theory and planning may play in the work of an artist, much depends also on the style and the spirit of the age. The spirit of romanticism, in all arts and in many historical epochs, tends to depreciate and discourage reliance upon objective, logical reasoning in theory and practice. It favors reliance upon the irrational factors in human nature and encourages the artist to proceed by spontaneous impulse and fantasy, rather than by theory and plan. Classical and neo-classical periods and styles, as in the Italian Renaissance and the eighteenth century, encourage rational planning. The artist in such an age tends to see less difference and less antagonism between art and philosophy, or art and science. Our own age is one of great diversity and eclecticism. It includes many artists who are strongly romantic and many who are classical or even scientific in temper. Contemporary artists differ widely in their attitudes toward science; some admire and some detest it.

Within a given art, such as painting, some styles involve a good deal of knowledge and of intellectual content. In the Renaissance and Baroque periods many paintings show a considerable knowledge of the physical, animal, and plant worlds. This is true of both Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Dürer. Some of their paintings and drawings show what was, for their time, a detailed understanding of anatomy, of optics, of perspective and illumination, of topography and meteorology. Other artists of the time show a wide knowledge of history, legend, theology, mythology, and sacred writings. In order to paint the Sistine frescoes, Michelangelo had to know a great deal about Christian, Hebrew, Greek, and Roman

religion, ethics, and symbolism. Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painters since 1870 or thereabouts have stressed the more purely visual elements in the art of painting. In recent years, this has been carried to an extreme in the various abstract and nonobjective movements. Here there is little or no demand for explicit representation or explanation of the physical, social, or intellectual world. This is not to say that the artist is ignorant of such matters. He may, as an individual, be deeply and broadly educated, as well as theoretically competent, as Kandinsky was. He may symbolize such ideas in his art. But such knowledge and theory are not definitely required as a part of the content of his work, or as a part of his equipment for practicing his craft. It is possible for an artist who stresses the decorative or fantastic elements in art to dispense with much of the factual knowledge which others require.

Intense opposition to aesthetics and other branches of philosophy and science is most obvious among artists of a romantic temperament. It goes along with other manifestations of the romantic hostility toward rationalism and objective thinking in general. It goes with an exaggerated fear of being "influenced" by other artists past and present, by museums, wealthy patrons, churches, or government authorities, or by reading, hearing lectures, or studying systematically in the field of art. The intensely romantic artist feels obliged to protect his sensitive ego from all corrupting influences in the outside world, including those which call upon him to think clearly and connectedly. In these days of great emphasis on individual freedom in art and education, we are perhaps leaning backward in our sympathy for this attitude. It is doubtless justified in occasional geniuses; but in many artists it is a mere excuse for laziness and self-pampering egotism. For a good many students who adopt this lofty attitude today, it might be a salutary experience to have to think clearly and with knowledge of the facts, at least during some brief period of their careers.

Artists of all types, like most other humans, tend to crave admiration and flattery; they resent not only negative criticism but—sometimes even more fiercely—the impartial, dispassionate analysis and investigation carried on by scientific aesthetics, art history, and scholarship. The sensitive artist, having created his beautiful product at a white heat of emotion, and "poured his heart's blood into it," resents any attempt to analyze or criticize it in objective

terms. He further resents any suggestion that his works are not highly original and creative, any suggestion that they show the influence of past or present artists in his field. To the trained, experienced critic or aesthetician, this debt is often obvious. He naturally points it out in discussing or evaluating the artist's products. This infuriates the artist, and makes him utter harsh words about critics and professors.

There is so much difference among artists of various arts, periods, and personality types that we cannot generalize in any absolute way about the value of aesthetic theory to the artist. Much depends on his personality and mood, his attitude toward theory in general; and this in turn depends not only on his inborn disposition, but on the way in which he has been trained and educated from birth to maturity. The only way, perhaps, to find out which artists can profit from aesthetics and which cannot is to give an opportunity to all students in all the arts to study a little of it, under one name or another. (It may be called, for example, principles of design, art principles, methods of criticism, principles of art history, psychology of art, or by some other name.)

There are other ways for the artist to learn from aesthetics, besides reading technical books about it. Aesthetic theory percolates gradually into the popular mind, by many gradual stages. One does not have to read the most ponderous books by erudite authors. Technical concepts in each generation spread outward into the popular mind by degrees. They are translated into simple form, with concrete applications and examples, by popular writers in magazines, newspapers, and school textbooks. In this form, if not in its original, difficult form, aesthetics influences present artists profoundly. In all civilized periods, the aesthetic theory of previous generations has affected the artists of later ones. Rightly or wrongly, some of the doctrines of yesterday become established and powerfully authoritative in the textbooks, educational methods, and critical standards of the next generation. A misconception of Aristotle's views on the "three unities" deeply influenced seventeenth- and eighteenth-century drama, especially in France. Some artists (the conservatives and academics) tend to accept such traditional principles in a docile and obedient way. The rebels revolt against them, leading the way to a new aesthetic theory for tomorrow, or perhaps reviving in part some theory of the day before

yesterday. Some of our most unconventional artists today are calling for a revival of medieval or oriental mysticism. Whether he likes it or not, it is impossible for the artist to avoid being influenced by aesthetic beliefs. They are in the air, and he breathes them in and expresses them again without knowing it. The main question is whether he will form his aesthetic beliefs in a conscious, rational way or by passive, unconscious imitation.

3. Different kinds of aesthetics

The subject of aesthetics is today in a state of rapid change and growth. It contains many different schools of thought, in sharp disagreement. This is true to some extent of all the humanistic sciences, such as economics and psychology; but it is especially true of aesthetics. The latter is just beginning to work out its basic orientation, its premises, field, and procedures, as the newest of the empirical sciences dealing with man and his cultural products. Because of the great diversity of opinion in aesthetics today, no one can declare with assurance that "aesthetics believes" this or that. One can find in it almost any kind of opinion and attitude one wants to find. The artist should not be too quickly discouraged if he fails to find at once the kind he is looking for.

Like the general public, artists often mistakenly believe that aesthetics is entirely devoted to tiresome and fruitless attempts at "defining beauty," or at setting up arbitrary "laws of beauty" and "rules of art." Any attempt at rules of art is, of course, likely to antagonize the contemporary artist at once. He will probably defy anyone to prove that he ought to work in any particular way, or that his works are less good than any others. It is true that aesthetics in the past, as a branch of philosophy, spent a great deal of time on the definition of "beauty" and the "laws" of aesthetic value. The futility and dullness of such discussions gave the whole subject a rather bad name. However, this conception of aesthetics is less and less true at the present time. Any attempt at laying down fixed rules for the artist is increasingly out of date. Contemporary books on aesthetics are less and less concerned with abstract definitions of beauty, ugliness, and similar abstractions; they deal more and more with the concrete phenomena of art and artists. Aesthetics

today is, to an increasing extent, a descriptive subject, like the older sciences. Its first concern is not to decide what kinds of art are good and what are bad, but rather to understand all kinds of art and artists more truthfully, more deeply and fully. The aesthetician today has little desire to dictate or even recommend to the artist how to manage his business.

Even in the newer, more scientific types of aesthetics, however, there is much that may fail to interest the artist. As any subject becomes more scientific, it tends to develop specialized lines of research. These are interesting to people engaged in them, and when put together they add to the sum of human knowledge; but the details often sound very boring to outsiders. Aesthetics today contains much discussion of technical problems in semantics and symbolism; of the nature of words, signs, and meanings; of the logical forms in which value judgments are expressed. Works of art and styles are analyzed with a minuteness of detail which seems to many artists and art lovers to be not only tedious but fatal to the mystery and charm of art. This is debatable; but at least it is attractive only to persons of a scientific turn of mind, and others have every right to avoid it. There are many different kinds of aesthetics, as there are kinds of artist, and each individual should look around for himself to find what will interest him in this large and varied field.

Different writers and schools of opinion in aesthetics today differ widely on such basic questions as the nature and standards of value in art, the functions of art, and the artist's role in society. These schools of thought express the contrasting world views of philosophy and religion in general. Some of them express the philosophy of modern, scientific naturalism and empiricism; some express a revival of medieval or oriental mysticism; some express a survival of the romantic individualism of the early nineteenth century, and some express the Marxist philosophy which now rules the communist world. Some theorists believe that the artist should be compelled to work for the good of the state or of some particular regime and ideology, such as communism or fascism; others insist that humanity will profit more in the long run by letting the artist pursue his own course freely, or at least within broad limits of accepted moral and legal policy. These believe that the artist can benefit society most by following his own creative impulses and ex-

pressing his spontaneous imaginings rather than by working under the close direction of any authority. This theory is naturally attractive to most artists, at least in the Western democracies.

Even on what the field of aesthetics includes, there is no exact agreement today. Some conservative writers still favor limiting it mainly to the subject of beauty and aesthetic value. Other writers (myself among them) would include all the more general, systematic attempts to understand and reason carefully about the arts and the psychological and social processes closely bound up with them. This would take in the more theoretical types of criticism, appreciation, and history in all the arts, especially those which attempt to base their statements on careful observation and logical inference rather than on personal taste and opinion. On the border line between aesthetics and criticism are many thoughtful books and articles by discerning artists and critics in which personal expression is blended with verified demonstration in a rather casual, unsystematic way. Such writings are valuable stepping-stones to lead the layman into the more technical branches of aesthetics if he so desires.

If the aim of the newer type of aesthetics is not to set up rigid laws of beauty, what is its aim? As in all science, the primary aim is knowledge and understanding—in this case, of the arts and related modes of human behavior and experience. Aesthetics aims at a description and explanation of the arts, including their tremendous variety of forms and styles, their origins, growths, and functions in various cultural settings, the main outlines of their historical evolution; their basis in human nature; their psychological and social processes. Eventually all science, including aesthetics, aims also at being of social value in the advancement of human welfare. It aims at increasing man's power through the knowledge and control of nature and human nature. Little has yet been done by aesthetics in this way; but at least we are coming to realize that art is a powerful force, comparable to atomic energy in the physical field. The power of art to influence human attitudes and actions has been known for thousands of years, and used by leaders in politics and religion. Today we use the power of art in the free world more for commercial advertising than for these larger purposes. But observation and experiment are showing us how art can influence human emotions and behavior in the realms of medical therapy and education, as well as of moral and political action. We are discovering

the power of art, not only to entertain people, but to stimulate them along certain lines and to relax or deter them in others. Art is not merely a luxury or a trivial device for pleasing and amusing people. It can shock and arouse the sensibilities to angry protest. It can strengthen a social order, or undermine and weaken it. It can influence the imagination, the loves and hatreds of people, especially of youth, and thus have a far-reaching effect on human conduct. Aesthetics is the subject which undertakes to study these powers, and to consider how they can best be used.

It is thus essentially an intellectual, scientific subject, which aims at knowledge and control as do physics and biology. But unlike these, its subject matter is the arts and their setting in human behavior. Where the botanist tries to understand the world of plants, the aesthetician tries to understand the world of art, as objectively and thoroughly as possible. He does not write primarily for the benefit of the artist, or to influence the artist. It is only incidental if what he writes happens to be of direct interest or use to any artist or art student. In so far as it is good for an artist to understand his art and his problems, not in a narrowly isolated way, but in relation to their broader psychological and cultural setting, then aesthetics can be valuable to the artist. But it is well to repeat this caution: that much knowledge or objective study of himself, his work, and the world is not always an unmixed advantage to the creative artist. For the artist who wants and is able to think out his problems rationally, aesthetics can help in explaining present trends in art and technology, in style and taste; and in the functions required of art, the relation of styles to deeper social trends. The artist can find in contemporary aesthetics discussions of how various kinds of art, old and new, fit into the life of their times; the portrait, the landscape, the symphony, the novel, mobile sculpture, the abstract color film, the television show, the modern city, the motor trailer, and the airplane. Aesthetics asks, and tries to answer, what kinds of art and artist seems to be most needed in our world at present, and which give promise of being most needed in the future.

One of the distinctive traits of aesthetics, as compared with other ways of studying art, is its breadth. It deals, not with one art, but with all the arts. The artist in any medium can be inspired by works in some other medium. The one who sticks too closely to his own misses many stimulating suggestions. Aesthetics attempts to inter-

pret for the specialist some of the common and divergent characteristics of all the arts, and to help him see how his own problems resemble and differ from those of fellow artists in other media.

Present aesthetics is not entirely descriptive or factual. It also deals with values. In part, the study of value itself can be carried on in a descriptive way; that is, we can investigate the nature of evaluation as a psychological process and see how it can be carried on more logically if this is desired. We can investigate the standards of value which have been used in appraising art at different times, and which are now used in art criticism. We can analyze and test the various functions assigned to art in the present-day world. But many readers ask for more than factual explanations. They ask for value judgments and formulas for appraising the worth of art. The aesthetician today is apt to be much more liberal and tolerant in this regard than the artist himself, who often condemns all kinds of art but the one which he is trying to produce. Artists are likely to be rather intolerant toward the styles of yesterday, which they consider out of date, and also toward rival styles and movements in the contemporary world. The modern aesthetician, in his theories of value, tends to recognize some good in many different kinds of art, and in all the great historic styles. He will refuse to join the violent denunciation by contemporary artists and critics of yesterday's art, and will often be more moderate in his praise of novelties. He will try to base his valuations on objective, comparative studies of different kinds of art and their demonstrable effects and uses in human life.

Although the aesthetician may observe an artist's works with care, he does not always take too seriously what the artist says and thinks about them, or about art in general. He finds this all too often a rag-bag of current clichés and vague generalities, one-sided and prejudiced. But there are many exceptions to this rule. What some artists have to say about art is highly important, and may be more important than the art they produce. Many artists, mediocre as producers, have become great teachers and critics. What a great artist says about his work is always worth examining, in relation to his products themselves and to supplementary details about his life and personality. Though often biased, and not to be taken at face value, his comments are significant data for interpretation.

The question of the relation of genius to rules has been debated for centuries. Present American attitudes toward art are still

much influenced by romanticism; by the early nineteenth-century revolutionary, individualistic antagonism toward all rules which might constrain the individual genius. We tend to emphasize his right to create as he pleases and to make his own rules. This view is diametrically opposed to the fascist and communist view that art should be regimented. In our democratic world, it is more moderately opposed by rather vague, uncertain protests to the effect that an artist should, after all, have some moral and social responsibility; that no human being has the right to be entirely a law unto himself. It is generally agreed that the artist must be limited by basic legal and moral standards, but these are rather loose and flexible in our day.

In the Western world, there is still a strong disposition among artists and students to flout all traditional rules and to deride past "academic" art, especially (in the visual arts) the realistic representation of nature. Teachers of art are, on the whole, more cautious than they used to be in telling students how to produce; they are often vague and timid in proposing rules, in criticizing students' work, or in affirming explicit aims and standards.

In contemporary aesthetics, the artist will find little theoretical defense for this extreme view, this utter rejection of traditional standards, or for the view that experienced art teachers have nothing to impart except elementary techniques. Aesthetics today is inclined to stress a middle ground between (a) the old veneration of traditional rules as absolutely binding and (b) the anarchistic extreme of rejecting them as totally false and worthless. The middle course being followed by relativistic aesthetics is to regard rules of art as somewhat analogous to the rules of a game such as baseball or cricket. These rules are made by man and not superior to man or eternally binding; they are made for the convenience and benefit of man, and can be altered at any time that men decide to alter them. Nevertheless, they are far from worthless. Traditional rules and standards of beauty in each art are the expression of particular styles and periods in each art, of various tastes and attitudes toward life. The Baroque style of music developed its own rules of harmony; Renaissance painting developed its own rules of perspective. These may all be worth learning by the twentieth-century artist, as part of his general background in theory and practice. The adult artist, however original and revolutionary, may sometimes wish to work

for a while in a traditional style. He will not do so exactly and slavishly, but with distinctive modern and personal touches. Some of the most original artists of our time, such as James Joyce in literature, Stravinsky in music, Picasso and Matisse in painting, Henry Moore in sculpture, make use of traditional styles at times, though remaining quite free to alter them. It is part of the contemporary artist's métier to learn how to practice some of the chief styles of the past, so as to know better how to devise new ones of his own.

All past rules of art and aesthetic value can be restated from the newer, more relativistic point of view. Instead of laying them down as absolute laws which all must follow, we can state them in a limited way. All the traditional "art principles," "rules of art," and "laws of beauty" can be restated in terms of "if" and "then." We can say, *if* you want to produce a certain kind of effect—for example, a sonata or a musical passage in the style of Haydn, or a design for a modern theater backdrop in the style of a Byzantine church, *then* this is more or less the way to do it. These are the specific values which can be expected from such a style of art under specified conditions. If you wish an effect of classical order, balance, and restraint, do this; if you wish an effect of romantic wildness, strangeness, and exuberance, do that. If you wish to create a song which can be easily sung by large groups of untrained people, then here are some characteristics it would be well to preserve. If you wish to create music which will help to create the mood of a medieval cathedral, or of a festival at Bagdad in the *Arabian Nights,* then here are some general specifications which it would be well to follow.

Past rules, we now see, are much less universal than their framers believed. Some are merely generalized expressions of certain stylistic practices; but they are far from being worthless for that reason. Far from it; they can be useful for the modern artist even though he is in no sense bound to follow them. He may take them only as starting-points to be freely varied, combined with each other and with new elements as he sees fit, or as new situations demand. Such an understanding of the main past and present styles in his art, including the aesthetic rules, "laws," and theories which have been associated with them, should be part of the artist's general training and technical equipment for creative work. A professional academy in the visual arts, music, or any other art, should impart this understand-

ing of traditional principles and this attitude toward them, along with instruction in basic techniques. It should present past aesthetic rules in terms of means to various aesthetic ends; as technical methods which have been found useful in the past for certain purposes, and may be found so again.

In applying old rules today or adapting traditional styles for modern uses, it is well to remember that they may not have the same effects on the modern beholder as they did when first evolved. Public tastes and attitudes change deeply in certain respects. What seems sublime in an ancient work may seem ridiculous in a modern one. The psychological effect of any detail in art depends on its total context, in the whole artistic and cultural setting. But in some respects, human tastes and aesthetic responses appear to be fairly constant through the ages. Such relations between various types of art and various types of human behavior are part of the subject matter of aesthetics today. It knows little about them, but is trying to learn more.

It is a mistake to think that aesthetics, or even art history and criticism, is concerned exclusively with the past. Both art history and criticism deal constantly with contemporary trends, trying to understand and evaluate them. Modern aesthetics is keenly interested in present trends in all the arts. It is hard for us to appraise, or even to understand the art movements of our time, but that is no reason for giving up the attempt.

As to what the ultimate aims of art should be, and what kinds of art will eventually be judged as greatest or most valuable to humanity, one's beliefs will depend largely on one's general philosophy and outlook upon life. Present aesthetics cannot and does not try to *prove* any one answer on these questions. But it can help the reader to understand the chief answers which have been proposed in the past and which are held by different schools of thought at the present time. It can summarize and compare the reasons for each of the basic aesthetic philosophies. In this way it can help the reader to make his own choice and to develop his aesthetic philosophy on a basis of tested knowledge and reasoning, if he so desires.

All the great, traditional world views of philosophy have in the past inspired and stimulated artists. Lucretius was inspired to express in poetry the Epicurean philosophy of materialistic atomism. Dante was inspired in the thirteenth century by the dualistic world

view which St. Thomas Aquinas expressed in philosophy. The artist of today, by studying not only aesthetics but all branches of philosophy, can, if he chooses, develop a more profound and inclusive conception of man and his place in the world, and this can find expression in his art.

No leading aesthetician of today in democratic countries would presume to advise individual artists, or artists in general, as to what specific kinds of art to produce. But aesthetics can suggest possible innovations, by showing the artist clearly and systematically what has been done in art and why. This will inevitably reveal some things which could be done but have not; some possibilities for original work at the present time. Through a comparative study of past and present styles of art, and of the potentialities of each medium and instrument, through a study of possible social and technological advances, we can infer in a general way that the artist could, if he wished, proceed along any one of several lines to create something new. For example, it is obvious that we have not yet begun to realize the full possibilities of the film and of mobile color in general for abstract, nonrepresentative design comparable to that of music.

We are living today in an age of great internationalism and cultural interchange—an age when exotic and primitive styles of art in every medium are pouring in upon the Western world. These have already inspired a great deal of creative effort in Western arts, not by exact imitation, but through leading the artist to combine certain traits from unfamiliar styles with others from the familiar Western tradition, and with new elements from his own imagination. Through comparative aesthetics, we are now going on to interpret, analyze, compare, and organize this vast and diversified flood of unfamiliar styles of art, as they come from the Far and Near East and from the jungles and islands of the primitive world. As we discover to our constant surprise and excitement how many different kinds of art have been produced in the past, the thought often arises, "how easy it would be for the modern artist to combine this and that element from different sources so as to make something new and valuable."

To be sure, major developments in art are not usually worked out by any such artificial synthesis. They are motivated in obscure, unconscious ways, and often take surprising turns which no one

could have foreseen. But it is possible that the methods of artists will become more rational and closer to science as our culture itself becomes more scientific. The trend today is toward thinking out our ventures, including the artistic projects on which we spend social funds, in a more explicit way. Our educational process, including instruction in the arts, is being steadily reorganized on a more scientific basis, with the aid of psychology and the social sciences. The artist of the future, as a product of such education, may be willing to think out his projects more planfully than in the past, with all the help that scientific knowledge and theory—including aesthetics —can give him.

In many fields, the artist is already receiving substantial aid from science, especially in improved materials and techniques. Can aesthetics and the other humanistic sciences help him think out his aims and standards of value as well? Can they help him to decide more wisely on what to do with his technical means? The question is too complex to be thoroughly explored in this essay. But at least it can be said that aesthetics as a science is far too young to have shown its full possibilities along this line.

Certainly, science will never solve all the artist's problems, or attempt to do so. It will offer certain maps and compasses, based on past experience, to guide his flights. But in so far as he is genuinely original, his flights will soon take him into unexplored regions, where the maps (if any) are still vague and unreliable. Only he can decide, in the last analysis, where he wants to go and why. Both the creative artist and the creative philosopher are pioneers of civilization, ranging far ahead of science to explore new paths for cultural progress. They provide the data and the basic insights for aesthetic science to investigate in detail. It will be a happy stage in cultural history when the artist, the philosopher, and the scientist can understand and recognize each others' functions in the common task of advancing human welfare, and work together more effectively.

X

THE PLACE OF AESTHETICS IN THE ART MUSEUM*

Aesthetics in the past has suffered from too little contact with the practical management of art. It has been too remote from the actual making, buying and selling, performing and exhibiting of works of art. Its development has been left too exclusively in the hands of philosophers, whose contact with the arts (except literature) has often been slight or casual and not an integral part of their professional work. This aloofness has many advantages, which have been amply praised by philosophers themselves. It also has the disadvantages pointed out by Fechner in his appeal for an approach to aesthetics "from below"; that is, for an empirical approach based on observation. But that approach itself, in the hands of laboratory psychologists, has too often become artificial in its own way, and equally remote from the actual processes and products of the arts.

A more thoroughly empirical approach might be achieved through working up from each of the practical realms where the arts are dealt with in various ways; through trying to recognize clearly what problems relevant to aesthetic theory are encountered therein; and through connecting such problems with the concepts developed in philosophical aesthetics. Art museum work is one such practical realm; art education is another. Still others are to be found in the publishing of literature and in the management of plays and concerts.

The problems met in any of these practical realms, and the types of thought used in deciding them, coincide with those of aesthetics in some ways and diverge in others. They are extremely diversified. Problems which the aesthetician would recognize as belonging to his own field, such as that of standards in evaluating art, are not encountered in a clear and simple way or solved in isolation. They are combined with others of many different kinds: financial, administrative, technological, and moral. For example, an art museum

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director will probably not state his evaluative problems in such terms as "does this picture possess aesthetic value?" He is more likely to ask himself, "which of these two pictures shall I buy, at the prices set? How can I recommend the choice most convincingly to my board of trustees?" In his thinking, there is an admixture of what the aesthetic theorist would regard as genuine aesthetic valuation, along with many other considerations.

Much art museum work is within the field of aesthetics if we define that subject in a broad sense—to include all studies of a scientific or philosophical character which deal with the general nature of the arts and related types of experience. The art museum is an institution devoted in large part to facilitating the experience of works of art, through aesthetic enjoyment, scientific study, or practical use. It should therefore be of interest to the aesthetician to observe what goes on there; what problems are encountered in the selection and display of works of art. Through such observation he may hope to enlarge his understanding of how art is actually experienced, used, and evaluated in the modern world.

In order to connect this practical realm with aesthetic theory, an attempt should be made to select from it those types of problem which are most relevant to aesthetics, and restate them in a clear and general way. One can then examine their relations to the central field of aesthetics and ask what help aesthetics can give in solving them.

It is not easy to achieve systematic co-operation between theorists and practical workers in the arts. The latter are sometimes hesitant and inarticulate in matters of aesthetic theory. Sometimes, on the contrary, they are extremely voluble and confident in dogmatizing about artistic values, and at the same time naïvely unacquainted with the theoretical difficulties involved, or with what previous thinkers have said. Practical workers in the arts, including artists and museum people, could profit on the whole by more careful study of aesthetic theory. But they must not hope for completely satisfactory, final solutions to their problems. Sometimes an unusually broad and open-minded museum director turns hopefully to the aestheticians for an answer to problems encountered in his work. He is usually disappointed by the abstractness of the answers given. They seem on the whole to be bookish, hair-splitting, and of little help in the concrete problems with which he has to deal.

On the other hand, practical workers in the arts are seldom fully aware of the theoretical issues involved in what they are doing. Like other practical people, they are governed to a large extent by custom and precedent. They decide things in a certain way without realizing that other ways are possible. They make dubious assumptions without stopping to analyze and question these assumptions. Only someone directly acquainted with aesthetics can recognize these theoretical issues and point them out explicitly.

The art museum is a comparatively new institution in this country as a whole. It is in a state of rapid growth and change. Consequently, it has had less time than many other institutions to become crystallized in a traditional mold. Its activities and policies, how it spends its money and the time of its staff are often subjects of frank and caustic comment by experts and ordinary citizens. Vast sums are being entrusted to it in the hope that these will be well expended for cultural and educational services to the public. It is hard, even for the most well-entrenched museum director, to take a position of lofty indifference toward requests that he justify his policies. The claims of different schools of art are being warmly debated in popular magazines and newspapers. The public is being made aware that no one's taste is final, and that authorities disagree.

This is a healthy condition, on the whole, but it tends to make life more complicated for museum directors and curators. There is a good deal of difference among them as to personal attitude. Some of them welcome and encourage frank discussion of the aesthetic issues involved in museum work. They feel that it makes for greater public interest and support in the long run. Others resent and oppose it. Some proceed on the democratic assumption that the public has a right to discuss the policies of its cultural institutions, while others prefer to be as autocratic as possible. It annoys the latter type of official to be pinned down with a pointed question as to why a certain expensive work of art is worth buying and looking at. If pressed, he may insist that such things can't be put into words: the object has a *je ne sais quoi* which only connoisseurs can appreciate. He will try to get by as often as possible without frankly meeting the fundamental question of aesthetic value. He is often adept at avoiding it by verbal technicalities, when addressing trustees' meetings or writing about the object in his own museum

publication. One can read a vast amount of such discussion, with minute description of the objects purchased, but no attempt to show specifically why they are important as works of art. That issue is obscured by dogmatic praise of the object in vaguely laudatory terms. It is obscured by countless erudite allusions to noble families which have owned the piece, and to scholarly authorities who have referred to it or to other works by the same artist. The purchase price is usually kept secret and possible differences of opinion about its quality or genuineness are ignored.

Under present conditions, there is much to justify a museum director in avoiding frank discussion of his policies and purchases. The public attitude toward art, especially that of local politicians, is sometimes ignorantly philistine and hostile toward art in general. No amount of reasoning could make such people approve the expenditure of public funds for buying works of art. For the good of the cause, it often seems best to the director to avoid public argument by any possible means. Even in the calm seclusion of a trustees' meeting it is not easy to defend the purchase of an unfamiliar type of art, primitive, classic, or modern, on a purely aesthetic basis. The theorists themselves cannot agree on standards and methods for appraising works of art; how then can they expect the busy and harassed museum director to do so? Even if such theoretical proofs were available, he knows too well how many stubborn prejudices, narrow and old-fashioned tastes in art, are often to be found in a comparatively well-educated, intelligent group of men and women. Small wonder, then, that the director is tempted to use roundabout methods, and defend his purchases by arguments more convincing to the people in control—for example, that the type of art in question has already been approved by this and that wealthy and aristocratic art collector.

It must be frankly confessed that modern aesthetics has done little in recent years to provide the museum official with improved methods for the aesthetic evaluation of art. The old, traditional ones are no longer acceptable; they are out of line with modern taste. To deserve the respect of practical administrators, aesthetic theory must provide, if not definite standards of evaluation, at least some mode of approach to concrete problems that will seem a little more intelligent and enlightening than the methods now in use.

It cannot accomplish this by remaining in philosophic isolation, but only through an open-minded study of the way in which aesthetic problems actually present themselves in practice.

As a step in that direction, there may be some value in stating a few of the basic problems which art museum administrators have to face and decide at the present time. All of them have a fairly direct relation to aesthetics.

We shall list these questions under five headings: (1) the field and organization of an art museum; (2) the art museum building and equipment; (3) exhibiting works of art; (4) acquiring works of art; (5) interpreting works of art.

1. The field and organization of an art museum

The meaning and extension of the term "art" is one of the traditional problems of aesthetics. The concept of "fine art," as a kind of skill or product devoted to beauty and aesthetic pleasure, is largely modern. The separation of fine from useful art has been denounced by many philosophers. In marking off a realm of fine art by shutting out most useful, commercial, and industrial products, the art museum is beginning with a rather vague and debatable conception of its field. The usual criterion of selection is that of beauty or "artistic value" as distinct from mere historical, archeological, or scientific importance. Thus many genuine Egyptian and Chinese antiquities are excluded from an art museum, on the ground that they are not works of art. Some modern machines, tools, and industrial products are regarded as having beauty of design. Do they belong in an art museum? There is evidently room for argument on these points.

One definition of "fine art" includes music and literature. Another excludes them and restricts the field to visual art. This restriction is usually assumed in the organization of the art museum. It is supposed to be primarily a museum of the visual arts. Yet concerts, organ recitals, dance programs, dramatic and film entertainments are commonly given in the art museum building. A few protest that it is not the museum's function to do so, but on the whole the diversification is gratefully accepted. The museum is then regarded as a "temple of the Muses," in which all the arts have a rightful place. Nevertheless, there is uncertainty as to how the em-

phasis should be distributed: how much of the budget should be allotted to performances rather than to buying static objects of visual art. Often this is decided gradually, in response to public demand or by special endowment funds for music and other arts of secondary emphasis. Uncertainty on such matters when the museum is established often leads to the omission of rooms and equipment which are afterward desired. To plan a museum purely as an exhibition gallery, then try to force motion picture and stage equipment, concert halls, and studios within its rigid marble walls, usually leads to unsatisfactory results. It is desirable to think out such basic questions of field and function as clearly as possible in advance of building.

Another traditional problem of aesthetics is the *classification of the arts;* the division of the total field of fine art into particular arts. There has been much disagreement as to the proper way to group the arts: for example, into such classes as representative arts, decorative arts, major and minor arts, useful or functional arts, graphic and theater arts. Some decision on this question is implied whenever a museum organizes separate *departments,* each with its own curator and galleries. The practical problem is that of dividing the total field of art into smaller fields. It can be divided into arts or mediums, as into painting, sculpture, and textiles. Another way of dividing is geographical, as into Far and Near Eastern art. The division is chronological when we speak of ancient and medieval art; racial or national, when we speak of Greek or Chinese art; religious, when we speak of Mohammedan art. All these bases are commonly used in marking off the departments in a modern art museum, each under its own staff of experts. Often several bases of division are used at once, with little theoretical consistency. As a result, overlapping is inevitable. Does a Chinese mandarin coat belong under textiles, under Far Eastern art, or under decorative arts? That kind of question is usually decided on practical grounds—for example, by asking which department has the proper equipment to care for such things. New departments, as of education, music, and motion pictures, are now springing up. Museums differ greatly from each other as to their plans of organization, and the whole subject could well be thought out more systematically.

2. The art museum building and equipment

Closely related to the questions of field and organization is that of the *physical plant.* From the standpoint of modern aesthetics, the form of the building and its equipment should follow and express the functions which are to be carried on there. The building is to be divided into various galleries, studios, offices, library, lantern slide collection, circulating exhibit department, lecture and conference rooms, auditorium, storage space, workshops, and so on. Hence the architectural design should come after and along with a careful discussion of the various departments which are to exist, their importance and mutual relations, and what they need to function adequately. Due allowance should be made for the growth of departments and for the adding of new departments and functions. Flexibility is now recognized as one of the primary needs of a good art museum building. Very few museums have been planned in this way. Often the staff is not consulted or even fully engaged until after the building is finished. The result is a huge, imposing marble box, covered with Renaissance ornament, whose walls are massive enough inside and out to resist all future efforts at functional adaptation.

Many fundamental questions about the building and future activities are usually decided long before the staff comes on the scene. For example, it has been decided that the building will be located in the heart of town, like the Chicago Art Institute, or in some remote and scenic park, like the San Francisco Legion of Honor Temple. This forever determines the kind of activities the staff will be able to undertake; whether school children can easily be brought there, whether business men can drop in during lunch hour, and so on. It has probably also been decided whether the museum will be combined with an art school or college, or quite independent. In either case, important consequences follow as to the type of service it will be called on to give. There is no definite rule to be followed, but intelligence and common sense demand that the development of the physical plant be discussed in advance by many qualified minds, with due regard to technical, educational, social, and other functional considerations, as well as to visible beauty.

The choice of *furniture, lighting,* and other interior equipment presents other practical problems, in which visual appearance is only one of many factors to be considered. One problem is to arrange chairs and benches so as to provide comfort and study facilities for school classes and occasional visitors on week-day mornings, while leaving room for crowds on Sunday afternoons. Usually comfort is sacrificed, and one must try to enjoy art while standing weariedly in one gallery after another, or sitting on a slippery, backless bench. Here again, there is certainly an answer in the way of comfortable, easily movable, folding chairs.

Lighting and the color of walls are also much-debated subjects. There is a school of thought which favors relying mostly on daylight, and one which favors artificial lighting. Some experts like tricky, dramatic spotlight effects, especially on sculpture, and others favor more diffused, restrained effects. Should lights be fixed or changing? What kind brings out the best qualities of the work of art in question? What kind distorts or obscures them? Should walls be inconspicuous and uniform, as when covered by tan monkscloth, or covered with fabrics of different color and texture? Which will bring out the works of art best and produce the best total effect?

An art museum is or can be a work of art in itself. There is room for creative art, not only in its architectural shell, and in the objects it contains, but also in the work of the director and curators who install the works of art and other furnishings. A gallery or a single wall can be crowded and confusing, with each object killing its neighbors, or well-ordered, interesting and attractive, with each object appearing at its best and helping to bring out the best qualities in others. A case, a wall, a gallery, or a whole museum interior can be treated as a unit, and analyzed as to its visual form and fitness for use. It can be appraised by aesthetic and practical standards as other works of art are appraised.

3. Exhibiting works of art

The complexity of the museum official's task appears more clearly as we consider the various possible ways of installing works of art for exhibition. These involve not only the details of lighting, wall-covering, showcases, picture frames with or without glass, and so on, but also basic principles of arrangement. Should things be arranged

primarily on a basis of what looks well? That is certainly one important objective, but there are others. The arrangement, in a large and diversified collection, has to make sense in relation to some rational scheme. Otherwise the public will be confused and unable to enjoy or study it successfully.

The most usual scheme is historical, by periods and nationalities. There will be one or more Egyptian galleries, according to different dynasties. There will be a place for medieval European art, and a place for Renaissance and later European art. Thus, in going around the museum, one gets a general effect of genetic progression, from ancient and primitive to modern. But this principle is cut across by another, that of arranging things according to art or medium. In other words, we have the same problem as in organizing the main museum departments and galleries. Modern paintings are usually kept together, and so are Chinese porcelain vases. Examples of one medium are more easily arranged in a unified group, and many people like to study them together, since their interests are specialized along that line. But people differ. Some want to see only etchings, and have them close together. Some want to see only Renaissance objects, and want to have everything Renaissance in one room—paintings, furniture, bronzes, pottery, tapestries, and so on. Some people like period rooms, which try to place works of art in something like their original domestic or cultural setting. Others abhor them, and want a frankly arbitrary grouping, designed for more effective comparison. Some like to bring together objects which differ as to both period and medium, so as to show some recurrent style or type—for example, to show examples of geometric design in the arts of different peoples.

There is no pleasing everyone. Each mode of arrangement has certain values; it aids the public in grasping certain aspects of art, and each has limitations. For variety, different ones are often used in different parts of the same museum. Some curators excel at one kind of arrangement, and specialize in it. Some museums have a primary duty along one line, as in showing the history of costume, and their course is determined by it. Most museums now have some fairly permanent installations, in galleries which seldom change, while other galleries are devoted to temporary exhibitions along different lines. It is interesting to bring together a temporary exhibit of objects from one's permanent collections, to see the effects of an unfamiliar combination.

Some flexibility for rearrangement is certainly desirable. In teaching, it is often highly instructive to compare two objects from separate galleries. But there is also a value in permanence of location. When teachers plan to bring their classes, or send students independently for study, they like to know what is going to be on view, and where. There can be no systematic planning for educational use if everything is liable to be rearranged, and some things removed from view entirely, by the time the visit takes place.

4. Acquiring works of art

We have already touched upon the question of how the museum director or curator is to defend his judgments of value in the purchase of art. We have seen how delicate and difficult a task it may be for him, especially when his tastes differ from those of the people to whom he is responsible. These are sometimes public officials and sometimes private individuals or corporate boards. To a large extent, his task may present itself as one in the psychology of persuasion or salesmanship, in finding the right argument and mode of approach to persuade the controlling powers that a certain sum of money should be spent for the object in question. Even when the object in question is a gift or a bequest, there are personal factors to be considered: persons of wealth or influence whom one does not wish to offend by a blunt refusal. Here again, it is hard to please everyone. Weak yielding to pressures may incur the disapproval of other influential persons, who expect the director to be a courageous leader in developing public taste. Some trustees have advanced, radical tastes, and want the director to side with them against the conservative faction. Some directors have great personal influence; their recommendations are accepted with little argument. Others are subservient, or in constant friction with the controlling powers.

Works of art are usually acquired by a museum through purchase, the preliminary phases of negotiation being conducted by the curator. The approval of the director and an accessions committee of the trustees is usually necessary before the final step. Evaluation has to be expressed eventually in willingness or unwillingness to pay a certain money price for the object in question. The decision to pay it represents a rough, total average of many different considerations, pro and con, positive and negative, aesthetic and nonaesthetic. The price paid is not entirely irrelevant to aesthetic evaluation; it ex-

presses, in quantitative terms, an estimate by the purchaser of the total value which the object seems to possess, for him and the institution he represents, under the present conditions.

How, then, does the museum official make up his mind whether to recommend the purchase? The process of evaluation, as it occurs in his own mind, may be very different from the process of persuasion, which he uses to secure the agreement of others. Both are psychological phenomena worth observing in aesthetics. What the aesthetician would regard as pure aesthetic evaluation, a judgment on the object's beauty or worth in direct aesthetic experience, operates in the purchaser's mind as one phase in a larger, more heterogeneous type of evaluation whose outcome is the decision to pay or not to pay the price. Along with it are the many other phases or considerations which seem relevant, and to which he gives hasty or careful thought. His own tastes and personality determine the relative weight which he will give to each argument, pro and con. Some he emphasizes consciously, and these often include the high-sounding arguments based on aesthetic and critical theory—arguments showing that the object in question fulfills the supposed requirements of great art. Other considerations may be at least as influential, and yet be given less conscious recognition, publicly and privately. Museum officials, being human, are susceptible to many personal motivations—for example, the desire to "put one over" on the director of another museum, by securing an object for which they know he has been angling.

The central question of beauty and aesthetic value has in itself many complex aspects, when considered from the standpoint of a social institution. One must always give some thought to differences in taste. Even if the director is quite sure that his taste is correct, and if other experts in his field agree, he can hardly afford to fill the museum with things which only a few special connoisseurs enjoy. He finds himself occasionally making compromises: accepting something which he thinks is only moderately good because the public likes it enthusiastically; passing by something which interests him extremely because it is too advanced for the community at present, or is unsuited to children, or might offend the members of some racial or religious group. Any museum open to the public, even when privately owned, has to adapt itself to public taste to some extent.

The museum official's own taste, which determines his judgments of beauty or aesthetic value, is usually somewhat conservative, but not extremely so. Persons known to be violent radicals or susceptible to every new fad are not often put in charge of museums. Museum directors are seldom to be found as the first or only sponsors of a new or unrecognized kind of art. But they are sensitive to current trends, and as a rule open-minded. They are quick to recognize a trend in art criticism, and in the tastes of leading collectors. They are quick to see which radical artists of a generation or two ago are now becoming respectable. They often try these out upon the community through temporary exhibits, before risking an expensive purchase. Thus they often seem radical in taste to the general public and to ultra-conservative art lovers. Through experience of many different kinds of art, their tastes become diversified and catholic. Being above the battle, they are often more tolerant in controversies over modern art than the artists themselves are.

If one comes to like a certain kind of art, it is easy to find authorities in aesthetics and art criticism to justify one's liking. We are living in a very tolerant, eclectic age, when critics are fearful of being thought conservative or blind to innovations. For every new experiment in art, some eloquent critic or press agent can be found who will point out its qualities of rhythm, unity, color pattern, emotional power, and so on. It matters not, to most readers, that the same thing, with slight variations, can be said of almost any other work of art. The standards of value accepted by contemporary aestheticians are so broad and flexible as to provide little help in pronouncing one object good and another bad, or one better than another. For this reason, aesthetics is of little help to the museum official in making up his own mind as to the relative beauty or aesthetic value of two different objects. He forms his taste on other grounds, and uses current theories, if at all, to justify them after they are made, and persuade others to accept them.

Aside from the object's beauty or aesthetic value, many other factors have to be considered in deciding whether it is worth the price. For example, one must ask how *scarce* or plentiful such objects are. Leonardo da Vinci left very few finished paintings, and they hardly ever come on the market. Small supply and large demand make their market value enormous.

An important factor in determining demand is the *historical im-*

portance of the artist or type of art. Supposing the beauty and aesthetic value of two pictures to be equal, preference will usually be given to an early work which was original for its time and made a distinctive contribution rather than to a later, more imitative work of the same type. The supposed historical importance of an object often far outweighs opinions about its relative beauty, and indeed helps to determine them. People who know art history often become enthusiastic about the beauty of some fourteenth-century primitive in a way which is incomprehensible to the layman, who judges more by the thing's direct appearance, regardless of chronology. The former's admiration is likely to go down several notches if he discovers that the picture was really made several centuries later.

Directly connected with the matter of historical importance is that of *authenticity* or genuineness, a question which looms up very large from the museum official's point of view. There is nothing much more damaging to his prestige than buying a fake. He must be sure that the object was actually made by the alleged artist, without too much aid from assistants or subsequent restorers. If anonymous, it must be of the alleged period and provenance—for instance, a genuine Chou dynasty bronze. Doubts along this line will outweigh any amount of admiration for the object's beauty of design and texture as it stands. Again, our admiration itself is usually affected by our beliefs about its authenticity. If we know the thing is a copy, we are quick to discover aesthetic flaws in it, by comparison with a genuine original.

The investigation of authenticity and related problems of date, authorship, and provenance are a promising field for the application of scientific method to the study of art. With the aid of historical scholarship and physico-chemical tests, the procedure is gradually being made objective. But many important attributions still rest to a large extent on the shaky foundation of some expert's mysterious "feeling" that the thing is "right" or "wrong." Many rest on dubious assumptions about the traits of style and technique which are supposed to have been prevalent at a certain period. Much remains to be done in formulating the methods of research and inference in artistic connoisseurship, and rendering them as scientific as possible. Connoisseurship as applied to expertizing particular works of art is a very different thing from theoretical aesthetics or general scholarship. Both are different from skill in verbally criticizing art.

But all of these fields overlap, and all have a place in art museum work.

The question of *scarcity* has to be considered, not only in general but in reference to each particular museum. A certain museum may be rich in Dutch painting and poor in Italian. The question will then arise whether it ought to buy more Dutch and become really outstanding in that field, or fill in some of its weak spots. In the United States especially, every small urban museum is ambitious to cover the whole range of art history. People read books on art history, visit the great metropolitan museums, and expect their local institutions to be equally extensive. It is almost impossible now to secure first-class Egyptian, Greek, and many other kinds of art. Hence, as a rule, the small museum can cover the whole field only by accepting mediocre examples. Many directors and curators would prefer to buy only what they regard as first-class material, but there is pressure in the opposite direction. The schools usually teach a little Egyptian history, and are disappointed if the local museum has nothing to offer in this field. It might fill in with reproductions, but the public wants to see originals in the museum building. For extension work—circulating loan exhibits from the museum to schools and elsewhere—reproductions and originals of secondary quality are much in demand. This work is called "bringing the art museum to the school," and is developing rapidly.

As more different groups in the public come to use the museum, desires are expressed for different types of exhibit. For example, textile designers may come to get ideas for a modern fabric, and be disappointed if the museum has no important Chinese or Persian textiles. Museum directors today are increasingly social-minded and wish to be of service to the community in various ways. Consequently, they have to pay more attention to public demands than the old-time, autocratic director did. They will try not to yield on matters of quality, but they are having to recognize that there are many different kinds of value to be considered in acquiring works of art for a public or semi-public institution.

In thus adopting a relativistic attitude in evaluation, they are quite in line with current tendencies in aesthetic theory itself. Also, they agree with current tendencies in recognizing that art has a broad social function and responsibility, and is not merely an elegant amusement for the few.

5. The interpretation of works of art

Acceptance of greater social responsibility by the art museum has included, for one thing, more active educational service. Formerly the objects were simply placed on view, for people to take or let alone; but now the museum is called upon to help the public understand and use them. Art is not a universal language; many forms of it are strange and repellent at first sight and require careful study under expert guidance if their deeper values are to be realized.

At first, many museum officials felt that education should be left for the schools and colleges; but school and college teachers are sometimes reluctant to attempt an explanation of art. There is an increasing demand for the museum to maintain its own staff of trained instructors, who can interpret art to the public and in other ways make the museum function as actively as possible in the life of the community. Their training to some extent parallels that of the curators, but with greater emphasis on educational methods, and less on methods of preserving and exhibiting art. It requires some understanding of the psychology of children at various age levels, and adults of different types, so as to adapt the mode of presentation to various interests and abilities.

Museum teachers are called upon to point out the differences between different styles and periods in art, to help illustrate lessons in history and other subjects with concrete visual examples, and to help explain the development of art in relation to cultural history in general. Much museum teaching is roughly classed as "art appreciation," especially when it is not presented in strict historical order. One of its aims is to increase the enjoyment of art, especially by children. Another is to help people understand and use it in various ways—as part of their general education, or in some technical, professional way. Museum educational work is done partly in the galleries themselves, by guidance and explanatory talks or "docentry" in front of the objects; partly it is done in classrooms and school auditoriums by means of lantern slides and other reproductions.

On the educational staff of a museum falls the principal duty of interpreting works of art through active teaching; but many other types of museum work contribute to interpretation. As we have

seen, the arrangement of works of art in historical, comparative, or other orders is itself significant in demonstrating general relationships. The museum library is full of interpretive books and articles. Labeling, which is usually done by the curator in charge of each department, can also be an important means of interpretation. Opinions differ on what kinds of label are best. Some favor reducing them to a minimum, giving only the artist's name, title, and perhaps date. Small, inconspicuous labels look well on a wall, and do not distract from the appearance of the objects. Longer descriptive accounts can be placed in pamphlet form somewhere in the gallery. In temporary exhibitions of unfamiliar types of art, there is greater use of long explanatory labels, charts, and photographs for comparison. Modern display techniques are used to make the exhibit as self-explanatory as possible.

The relation of all these types of interpretive work to aesthetics is fairly obvious. The fundamental question is *what qualities or aspects of art should be stressed?* This implies an assumption, whether consciously realized or not, on what qualities of art are most important and valuable. Even a negative policy, of doing little or no interpretation, implies debatable assumptions—for example, that art can speak for itself, or that anyone capable of appreciating it can find out about it for himself.

Some interpretation is highly evaluative and eulogistic, devoted to praising the object's merits and thus "selling" it to the public. This attempts to answer the question mentioned above, of why the object is worth putting in an art museum. If too rhapsodic, it is likely to be discounted as prejudiced. A more objective approach is often preferred, on the theory that the museum's main duty is to explain the facts, and let people decide for themselves whether they like the thing or not. It is recognized that tastes differ, and that everyone cannot be expected to like everything in the museum. Many educated people today are interested in finding out about art, even when they consider much of it ugly. They would prefer to be told what the artist is trying to do than be urged to like or dislike it.

Among more objective approaches, the *historical* is most common. Young instructors, fresh from college courses in art history, tend to devote their gallery talks to repeating information about the artist and his life and times, or about the subject represented in

a picture. Some stress the techniques used, especially in talking about craft work. These kinds of interpretation are often interesting and useful, but have the disadvantage of distracting the visitor's attention from the work of art in front of him, while he listens to what the teacher is saying about something which happened long ago.

There has been a tendency, therefore, toward a more *demonstrative* kind of interpretation, devoted to pointing out by word and gesture those visible details and relations in the work of art which the teacher considers most important. There is of course much room for argument on what these important characteristics are. On the whole, the tendency is to pick out characteristics which seem to be distinctive in determining the peculiar style of an artist, a period, or a nationality; characteristics which will therefore be of help in recognizing styles. Characteristics of historic importance are emphasized: those which represent the artist's chief contribution to his age; and perhaps, on the other hand, limitations which he reveals in comparison with other artists. Thus the presence of a naturalistic perspective or color pattern will be pointed out in one work; its absence in another. This trend in popular education follows the trend toward objective form analysis of art on more advanced levels of scholarship.

It does not follow, however, that interpretation must be merely visual, pointing out only what can be seen. This itself would imply a dubious assumption that the visual qualities in art are always most important. In some kinds of art, they doubtless are, especially in certain phases of modern art which aim largely at visual design. But in other kinds of art, other qualities were stressed by the people who made and used them. For example, in oriental and medieval European art, symbolism of a religious and philosophical nature was an important aim. The tendency in museum teaching, then, is to stress that aspect in interpreting oriental and medieval art. For this purpose, the museum teacher finds himself having to study the history of aesthetics as well as the history of art. He tries to learn how people in other cultures regarded art; how they used it and by what standards they judged it.

A still more relativistic attitude is enforced by the variety of present-day interests in art. A class of art school students, interested in the techniques of pottery, may come to inspect the collection of

Chinese porcelains. It would be irrelevant to stress the symbolic meanings of a porcelain vase to them when they are interested at present only in the color and chemistry of glazes.

As a result of such studies, the museum teacher's own philosophy of art usually tends to become more relativistic, less provincial, and more broadly sympathetic toward the infinite variety of artistic forms and values. An absolutism based on the assumption that Greek art or any other single style is perfect can hardly survive long experience in a large, metropolitan art museum. On the contrary, the museum may perhaps be charged with too broad and indiscriminate a respect for different kinds of art; with a facile eclecticism which is not conducive to original creativeness. Some philosophers say that people in highly creative periods do not collect and reverently preserve the products of antiquity, but destroy them ruthlessly to make room for new. Perhaps this age is doing its share of destruction elsewhere, as well as of creation along certain lines.

In any case, the museum's function is to select and preserve what seem to be the most important visible art products of this and other periods, and to help transmit their principal values to our own culture. In its fourfold task of selection, care, display, and interpretation, many fundamental concepts and theories of aesthetics are put into practice. It is therefore one of the many kinds of laboratory open to the modern aesthetician who wishes to leave his desk and observe the phenomena of art in action.

At this stage, aesthetic theory can offer no adequate, ready-made solutions to the problems we have been considering. But it can offer the more thoughtful, open-minded museum official some help in formulating these basic problems and in realizing the consequences of deciding them in various ways.

XI

"THE AFTERNOON OF A FAUN" AND THE INTERRELATION OF THE ARTS*

Increasing attention has been given in recent years to the subject of relations among the arts. Educators are coming to realize that the study of the arts has been much too specialized. Too many books and articles, too many school and university courses have treated only one art. It is impossible to understand any one art thoroughly if we consider it only in isolation. Every great movement, every great style in art has expressed itself in all or many of the arts at about the same time. This was true of romanticism, for example. To understand the role of any one art, such as painting or music, in the culture of a certain period, we must compare the contributions of all the arts to that period. We must try to find out what they have in common, how they differ, and how they co-operate in expressing certain basic thoughts and feelings of the age.

In the present article, I will try to focus this problem on one particular work of art, a famous ballet. This ballet is a product of several constituent works of art in different media—a poem, a musical composition, a dance, drawings, paintings, costumes, stage settings, and all the other elements which contribute to a theatrical spectacle. Some of them appeared separately and independently; some in a combination of elements. All appeared in close succession in France in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To analyze this development, I shall first have to review some events which are familiar to all students of French literature, art, and music. Later on, I shall try to point out some general relationships between the arts which are less familiar. We shall see, first, how a certain theme or subject can be treated by different arts; secondly, how one art can stimulate creation in other arts, through offering themes or ideas which are capable of development in other media. Thirdly, we shall see how each art necessarily treats this theme in a

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different way, according to its own special potentialities and limitations; how it selects different aspects of the subject for emphasis or for elimination. Fourthly, we shall see how several arts can combine to produce a single compound work of art, a ballet. Fifthly, we shall see how these elements can be similar or dissimilar as to style and mode of interpretation.

The Afternoon of a Faun is an excellent example of co-operation and synthesis among different arts. This is true partly because of the high quality of the artists who contributed to it. Seldom in recent times have five or more of the leading artists of a period co-operated to produce a single product in the realm of the fine arts. Occasionally a single great artist, such as Leonardo da Vinci or Richard Wagner, is proficient in several fields at once, but this does not often happen nowadays. Many modern artists have been too individualistic to collaborate well in a joint enterprise.

The artists whose work we shall consider, and the approximate dates of their productions, are as follows:

Mallarmé: the poem, *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* (1876).

Manet: illustrations for the poem (1876, 1887).

Debussy: tone poem for orchestra (1894).

Nijinsky: the dance; choreography (1912).

Bakst: the décor; costumes and setting (1912).

Diaghileff: the direction and co-ordination of all factors (1912).

To this list one may add, for English readers, the name of Aldous Huxley, author of an excellent English translation of this difficult poem. Needless to say, a great many capable artists helped in the planning and execution of all the musical, theatrical, and choreographic effects.

In the late nineteenth century, the influence of Richard Wagner, of his music-dramas and his theories about art, was still powerful. He had argued that poetry and music could co-operate with the arts of the theater to produce new, compound forms which would be higher and greater than any of these arts in isolation. He had strengthened the already strong devotion of romantic composers to "program music"—music which tries to describe a scene or an action, to express emotions, and to suggest images from all the senses. These ideas helped to stimulate the impressionist painting, poetry, and music of the late nineteenth century, and also their synthesis in the twentieth-century ballet. "The arts are one," romantic

theorists had maintained, "because all the arts express the same underlying human nature and, beneath that, the great spirit of the universe. Their apparent differences are only superficial." [1]

The symbolist group of French poets, of whom Mallarmé was an influential member, talked much about "correspondences" between the arts, and also about correspondences between the senses. They felt that it was, or should be, easy to bridge the gaps between hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, and touching. It should be possible, accordingly, to translate an emotion or a mood from painting into poetry, or vice versa; from music into painting, or from poetry into music. This was one of the leading aesthetic beliefs of the late nineteenth century, and it led many artists to experiment with the translation of moods or images from one medium into another. For example, Debussy could write *Reflets dans l'eau* for the piano, while Monet painted such reflections on canvas. A line from Baudelaire's poem *Harmonie du soir* could suggest the mood for Debussy's *Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir.* Baudelaire had written elsewhere, *"Les parfums, les couleurs, et les sons se répondent."* In England, Whistler called many of his paintings by musical titles, such as *Nocturne.* The symbolists spoke of music as "colored hearing," and as "orchestrated verse." They loved vague allusions and unusual, evocative words. Mallarmé said that poetry should "evoke in a deliberate shadow the unmentioned object by illusive words." The symbolists often wrote obscurely; Mallarmé, especially, used many unusual French words, some of which he revived from ancient sources. He aimed, says the English critic Edmund Gosse, "to use words in such harmonious combinations as will suggest to the reader a mood or condition which is not mentioned in the text, but is nevertheless paramount in the poet's mind at the moment of composition."

The Afternoon of a Faun was written to be declaimed or spoken aloud as a monologue. It was written in 1876 for Coquelin aîné, and published the same year.[2] It represents the woodland creature, part man and part animal, on some lonely island. In a long soliloquy, he expresses his fantasies in subtle and sophisticated terms

[1] Cf. *The Arts and Their Interrelations,* p. 423, where this idea is discussed.

[2] Henri Mondor's *Histoire d'un Faune* (Paris: Gallimard, 1948) recounts in detail the long development of the poem in Mallarmé's mind, including some preliminary versions.

which are far from being genuinely primitive; they were not, of course, intended to be so. But the fact is worth noting in contrast with the attempt at a somewhat more simple and earthy primitivism in Nijinsky's dance. Both Fauns were modern French rather than ancient Greek.

Mallarmé's Faun has seen, or thinks he has seen, a group of nymphs in the distance. He has pursued and lost them. He is not quite sure they were not swans or birds; he is not sure whether he really saw or only imagined them, as projections of his own desires.

> Ces nymphes, je les veux perpétuer.
> Si clair,
> Leur incarnat léger, qu'il voltige dans l'air
> Assoupi de sommeils touffus.
> Aimai-je un rêve?
> . . . . . .
> Réfléchissons . . .
> ou si les femmes dont tu gloses
> Figurent un souhait de tes sens fabuleux!

"Vaguer and vaguer," says Edmund Gosse in an early discussion of the poem,[3] "grows that impression of this delicious experience. . . . Perhaps . . . the ever-receding memory may be forced back. So when he has glutted upon a bunch of grapes, he is wont to toss the empty skins in the air and blow them out in a visionary greediness. But no, the delicious hour grows vaguer; experience or dream, he will never know which it was. The sun is warm, the grasses yielding; and he curls himself up again, after worshipping the efficacious star of wine, that he may pursue the dubious ecstasy into the more hopeful boskages of sleep."

The contrast between his rambling meditations and his occasional vivid memories of the nymphs is emphasized in the French text by a contrast between italic and roman type—a device which, obviously, cannot be transferred to any other art or medium, or even to literature as a spoken art.

> *O bords siciliens d'un calme marécage*
> *Qu'à l'envi des soleils ma vanité saccage,*
> *Tacites sous les fleurs d'étincelles, CONTEZ*
> 'Que je coupais ici les creux roseaux domptés

[3] *Questions at Issue* (London, 1893).

Par le talent; . . .
'Et qu'au prélude lent où naissent les pipeaux,
'Ce vol de cygnes, non! de naïades se sauve
'Ou plonge . . .'
Inerte, tout brûle dans l'heure fauve . . .

The poem's general thesis or controlling idea is stated in the following lines, about halfway through the text:

que nous amusions
La beauté d'alentour par des confusions
Fausses entre elle-même et notre chant crédule.

Or, in Huxley's free rendering:

that we
Falsely confuse the beauties that we see
With the bright palpable shapes our song creates.

Of course, the distinctive value of the poem does not lie in this abstract idea, so often expressed in verse and prose, but in the evocation of a mood and a reverie through fine-spun imagery. Nevertheless, the idea is there as an organizing principle, which helps us to grasp the meaning of the whole in a rational, as well as an emotional, way. Shifting clouds of musical, obscurely suggestive words and cryptic metaphors blur all definite outlines of thought and action, as impressionist painting obscures the contours of solid objects in a shimmering haze of light. But the lines just quoted indicate that this obscurity of detail is intentional and consistent with a pervasive idea: that the borderline between outer reality and the inner life of dream and desire is itself obscure; so that sometimes we neither know nor care in which realm we are living at the moment. This abstract idea would be hard or impossible to express in pantomime, and the ballet does not attempt it. Of all the visual arts, the film is perhaps most capable of suggesting how it feels to have dreams or hallucinations which can hardly be distinguished from objective reality.[4]

Nor does the ballet try to enact the brief but vividly erotic scenes, combining male lust with Lesbian passion, in which Mallarmé's

[4] A project for a film version of *The Afternoon of a Faun* was outlined by Emile Cailliet of the University of Pennsylvania in the *Modern Language Journal,* XXIX (March, 1945), 224–230.

Faun briefly recalls his partly frustrated desires and the escape of the maidens.[5] This would have been impossible on the stage. Even the much-expurgated pantomime of the ballet was regarded as shocking by many of its first Parisian observers and critics, who raised a tumult in the auditorium.

Nevertheless, Mallarmé himself is credited with the first suggestion that his poem be transformed into a dance, in the following quotation from the original program of the ballet in 1912: *"On devrait danser 'L'Après-midi d'un Faune' au milieu d'un paysage avec des arbres en zinc."* Still more, this sentence goes far to hint at the final conception of the ballet as flat and highly stylized.

A talented group of artists in different fields, some of whom called themselves "impressionists," met regularly at Mallarmé's home. Among them was Debussy, a much younger man, who listened eagerly to the brilliant conversation of Mallarmé and Baudelaire. Some eighteen years after the poem was written, he produced his tone poem by the same name, giving credit to Mallarmé's poem as its inspiration. Mallarmé lived to hear Debussy play it on the piano, and liked it. "I had not expected anything like that," he said. "The music prolongs the emotion of the poem and fixes the scene more vividly than color could have done."[6] He did not live to see the ballet. Debussy's *Prélude* was first performed by orchestra in 1894 before a small group, and the critics were divided in their opinions. It has become a classic of the concert hall today, and is recognized as one of the most original and perfectly realized achievements in the history of music. It is self-sufficient as a piece of music, and is enjoyed by millions who have never read the poem or seen the ballet, even though the program notes usually mention them.

The records show that Debussy intended at first to write a trilogy for the orchestra; this accounts for the word "Prélude" in the title. One can only speculate on how he might have worked out the proposed "Interlude" and "Paraphrase." At least, we know that he

[5] In an earlier version of the poem, called *Monologue d'un Faune* (1865), the nymphs were more definitely real and the Faun less frustrated. It begins with the stage direction, *"Un Faune assis laisse de l'un et de l'autre de ses bras s'enfuir deux nymphes."* It closes with the line, *"Adieu, femmes: duo de vierges quand je vins."* Mondor, *op. cit.*, pp. 107–111.

[6] Mondor, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

revised the *Prélude* after dropping the idea of these additional parts. Did he include their essential features in the *Prélude* itself? No one knows. But at least he made it clear that the *Prélude* was not intended to be a literal synopsis in music of the action of the poem itself. The poem represents the faun only as dreaming of his past encounter with the nymphs; the ballet undertakes to show that encounter itself, and the music lends itself to that interpretation. Hence music and ballet can both be called "preludes" to the poem.

The music begins (Fig. 1) with an attempt to suggest in sound the atmosphere of drowsiness and dreaminess, as of a hot afternoon in a forest glade. It achieves this, in part, through a rhythm which is

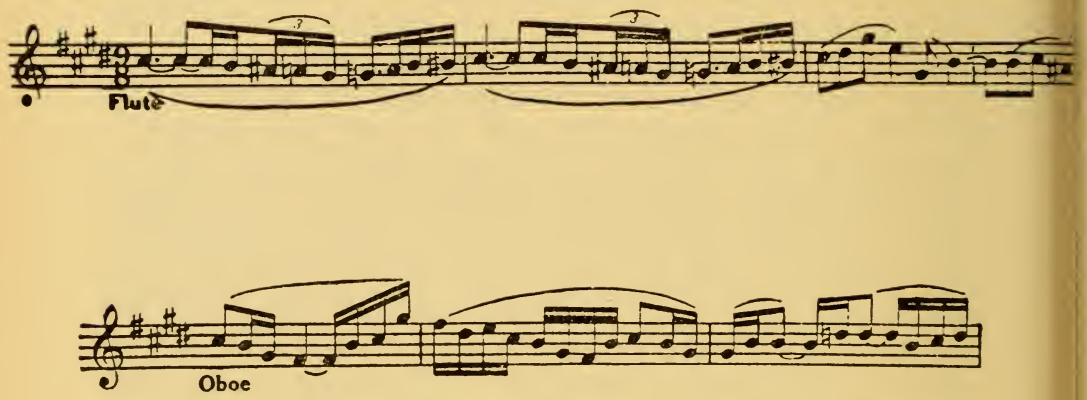

FIG. 1. DEBUSSY: *Themes from Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune, first section*

extremely irregular and lacking in any definite, metrical beat which might suggest, on the contrary, alertness or energetic, forward movement. The accents occur at constantly changing intervals, as the meter shifts from 9/8 to 6/8, 9/8, 12/8, 3/4, and 4/4. The effect of drowsiness is reinforced by the soft, mellow tones of flute and strings, in a melting harmony where intervals of pitch are also irregular and obscure. Strange chords are heard for a moment, then lost at once. The solo flute suggests a pastoral scene—a glissando for harp and low, murmuring accompaniments for the strings suggest the flickering sunlight and shadow of a forest clearing. Such effects were characteristic of Debussy's work in general, and paralleled certain traits of the impressionist movement in painting. Both Debussy and Monet were drawn especially to clouds, waves, ripples in water, and

the foliage of woods and gardens. In the *Prélude,* Debussy conveyed them with the full power of the orchestra; they are much more difficult on the piano, whose quality of sound is inevitably percussive.

The opening passage of the *Prélude* is not all drowsiness; it is punctuated with vague hints of emotional excitement, which rise in intensity until the contrasting, second part of the composition is reached (Fig. 2). This is quite different from the first in rhythm, harmony, and timbre: it is a stately dance measure, *"très soutenu,"* with firm, regular beats, classical chords, full, rich tones including brass and drums. It is well suited to suggest the entrance of the group of nymphs, but only if one thinks of them as moving in the firm pattern of a stately dance; not as themselves timid, shrinking, and drowsy, *dormeuses, meurtries de la langueur,* in the words of the poem. In the closing section of this three-part composition, the

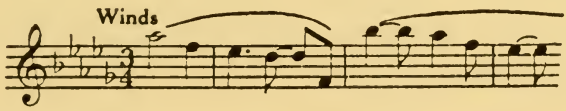

FIG. 2. DEBUSSY: Theme from *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune,* middle section

music returns to the original theme of the Faun's solitary reveries, *"avec plus de langueur,"* and fades softly away at the close, into the silence of sleep.

Shortly before the First World War, in that period of creative exuberance which now appears as a Paradise Lost to those of us who have lived on to the middle of the century, Mallarmé's conception of the Faun achieved full visual expression. And yet, was it Mallarmé's conception? Not exactly his, nor yet Debussy's, for several other personalities contributed something to it. Nijinsky, greatest dancer of the epoch, was fascinated by the theme, and worked out his own choreographic interpretation of it for the Russian Ballet. Léon Bakst, Russian decorator who poured bright Slavic colors into the somewhat drab rooms and garments of early twentieth-century Europe, designed the scenery and costumes. The organizing genius of Diaghileff merged all these individualistic temperaments, as well as those of orchestra and stage crews, into a finished performance. It was he, according to some contemporaries,

who suggested to Nijinsky the archaic conception of the Faun, proposed his museum studies, and inspired the choreography.[7]

The official program of the seventh season of the Russian Ballet, presented in Paris in May, 1912, announces "l'Après-midi d'un Faune, Tableau Chorégraphique de Nijinsky sur le Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune de Claude Debussy, dans le décor de Léon Bakst." The presentation was in the Théâtre du Chatelet, and Gabriel Astruc was listed as "Directeur de la Société Musicale." The "argument" of the ballet was summarized as follows:

Ce n'est pas "l'Après-midi d'un Faune" de Stéphane Mallarmé; c'est, sur le prélude musical à cette épisode panique, une courte scène qui la précède. Un Faune sommeille; des Nymphes le dupent; une écharpe oubliée satisfait son rêve; le rideau baisse pour que le poème commence dans toutes les mémoires.

Another edition of the program gives a longer synopsis of the action. Once more, it emphasizes the episode of the scarf, which had not figured at all in Mallarmé's poem. Of *l'Après-midi d'un Faune,* begins this anonymous writer:

there is practically no story. It is an animated decoration conceived within the rigid limits of an antique bas-relief. The principal figure is the Faun. The scene at the back is merely decoration without attempt at natural representation. The unearthly, haunting strains of Debussy's music guide the action of the Faun, who is lifted for a brief space out of the nebulous somnolence of brutish existence by the bright apparition of a company of nymphs. They appear from the left, moving in the conventional attitudes of painted figures, arms and legs in angular disposal, first three, with arms interlocked, then one, and again three. They stand rigidly posed below the Faun's retreat. Startled from his reverie and scenting the presence of beings that stir his sensual yearnings, the Faun leaves his perch and descends to their level. Surprise, fear, curiosity—such swift emotions are interpreted by strange, elemental movements of the hands and arms. Startled, the nymphs flee, but immediately return, while the Faun, growing bolder, seeks to woo them. Again they disappear and one returns for a final view of the woodland male. They lock arms,

[7] S. Lifar, *Diaghilev* (London, 1940), pp. 201–202, quoting Igor Stravinsky, *Chronicle of My Life*. Others disagree. Says W. A. Propert, "In *'L'Après Midi'* Nijinsky had devised a ballet out of his own brain, reacting to the impulse he had received from the vases." *The Russian Ballet in Western Europe, 1909–1920* (London, 1921), p. 77.

but a sudden panic sends her gliding away, leaving behind a filmy scarf that the Faun picks up and carries to his rock perch. Some subtle odor prolongs the stimulus to his aroused sensations and he settles down with it into voluptuous dreams.

Thus the action of Mallarmé's poem is entirely transformed to meet the practical requirements of the ballet. In part, these arise from the moral conventions of our time, which would proscribe any pantomimic showing of the nude maidens' intimate embrace, the Faun's attempted rape and the details of his frustration; such images are tolerated only in rather cryptic, literary symbolism. Even Nijinsky's fetishistic pantomime with the scarf was too vividly erotic for contemporary Parisian taste,[8] and it has been toned down in subsequent performances by other dancers. In part, the change is due to the ballet's need for concrete objects and for action of some kind, to replace the poem's many abstract images. Hence the sleeping nymphs become lively dancers, and a colorful scarf is introduced to augment the decorative scheme.[9]

Further disparities exist between the stylistic preferences of the

[8] G. Calmette of *Figaro,* outraged by Nijinsky's final gesture with the nymph's veil, denounced it in an article entitled *Un faux pas:* "We saw a faun, incontinent, vile, his gestures of erotic bestiality and heavy shamelessness. That is all. And well deserved boos greeted this too expressive pantomime of the body of an ill-made beast, hideous from the front, even more hideous in profile." Quoted by Serge Lifar in *Diaghilev* (London, 1940), p. 271.

[9] When I lectured on this subject in Paris in 1950, Serge Lifar, director of the ballet at the Paris Opera, was in the audience. After the lecture, I asked him to discuss Nijinsky's Faun as he remembered it. He criticized Nijinsky as having been too realistic; as having held an actual bunch of grapes and pretended to eat them. Also he felt that Nijinsky's Faun was too statuesque and too broken in rhythm, moving in short, detached steps and gestures. His own conception of the Faun, Lifar continued, was less realistic; he held no grapes, but raised his hand above his mouth as if pretending to eat some. His movements were more continuous, though sharply angular and tense; more in keeping with Debussy's music, which he used with many repetitions of certain passages. Believing that Mallarmé's Faun had not really seen the nymphs, but only imagined them, he preferred to dispense with them entirely in the ballet. At one time he danced the role entirely alone on the stage, lying down much of the time, and indicating his fantasies by gestures. But, he said, the ballet managers had insisted on having the nymphs to please the public, so he had included them in recent years. Cf. S. Lifar, *Ballet: Traditional to Modern* (London, 1938), p. 212.

A critic in the audience also spoke of a "confusion" in Nijinsky's idea, to

various artists concerned. They exemplify certain major trends of the early twentieth century. For instance, Debussy did not like Nijinsky's conception of the Faun. He said outspokenly that it was ugly, "Dalcrozian, in fact." He did not like the stiff, angular gestures, and thought Nijinsky did not appreciate his music. In truth, Debussy's music is not stiff and angular, but on the whole soft and melting. Debussy, like Mallarmé, had produced his art in the rosy afterglow of the romantic era, with its love of softly curving forms and rich, mellow textures. Manet's simple line drawings of the Faun and Nymphs for the 1876 and 1887 editions of Mallarmé's poem (Figs. 3, 4) are suave and flowing, with no hint of archaic stylization.[10]

By Nijinsky's day, a strongly anti-romantic trend had asserted itself. It was evidenced in painting and sculpture by cubism, with its hard, bare, geometrical shapes and its love of drab, harsh, or monotonous coloring. It was shown in the new tendency to glorify archaic and primitive sculpture, such as that of the early Greeks, and the still more drastically stylized, geometrical sculpture of the African Negro tribes. Gauguin's portrayal of the primitive Polynesians had been stiff, flat and often angular rather than gracefully flowing, a marked reaction from romantic pictures of the "noble

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the effect that the nymphs were real, whereas Mallarmé had meant them as merely imaginary.

I disagree with both M. Lifar and this critic on one theoretical issue involved. Whatever Mallarmé's conception was, it is not binding on choreographic or musical interpretations of the subject, which are new works of art and free to depart from it. The dance is likely to be more interesting visually with actual nymphs on the stage, and not only for popular taste. There will be less chance for solo virtuosity by the Faun, but more to see in the way of contrasting colorful dancers, costumes, and gestures. Whether Mallarmé conceived the nymphs as real or not, their introduction on the stage by Nijinsky is not a confusion but a legitimate variation on the original theme, adapting it to a different medium.

[10] Even more so is Boucher's painting, *Pan and Syrinx* (Fig. 5), in the National Gallery in London, where a pair of embracing nymphs is surprised by a faun, much as Mallarmé describes them. Albert Thibaudet, in *La Póesie de Stéphane Mallarmé,* speculates that the poet may have been inspired by this painting during his London visit in 1863. But, says Mondor, it was not acquired by the Gallery until 1880, and there is no proof that he ever saw it. *Op. cit.,* pp. 19, 252.

savage" a century earlier. Nijinsky's angular conception of the Faun was thus in keeping with advance-guard trends of his own generation and even of the 1890's. It was more akin to Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps* than to Debussy's *Prélude*. But he lived in a period of

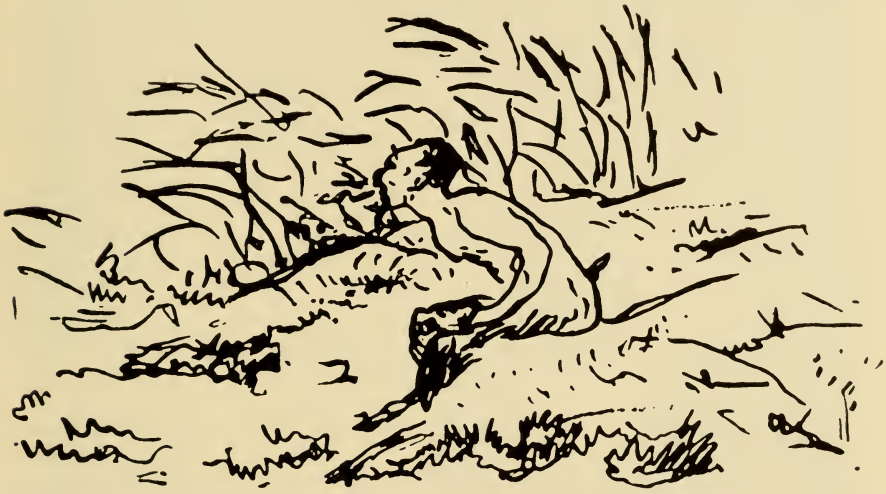

FIG. 3. MANET: *The Faun*

FIG. 4. MANET: *The Nymphs*

transition, and being a complex personality himself, found something to stimulate and satisfy him in Debussy's music, even though the composer did not always return his admiration. Nijinsky and Debussy were not directly antipathetic; their personalities coincided

FIG. 5. BOUCHER: *Pan and Syrinx*

Fig. 6. Greek Vase Painting, Late Fifth Century b.c.

Fig. 7. Greek Vase Painting, Sixth Century b.c.

FIG. 8. NIJINSKY IN "THE AFTERNOON OF A FAUN"

FIG. 10. BAKST: *Costume for the Faun*

FIG. 9. BAKST: *Costume for a Nymph*

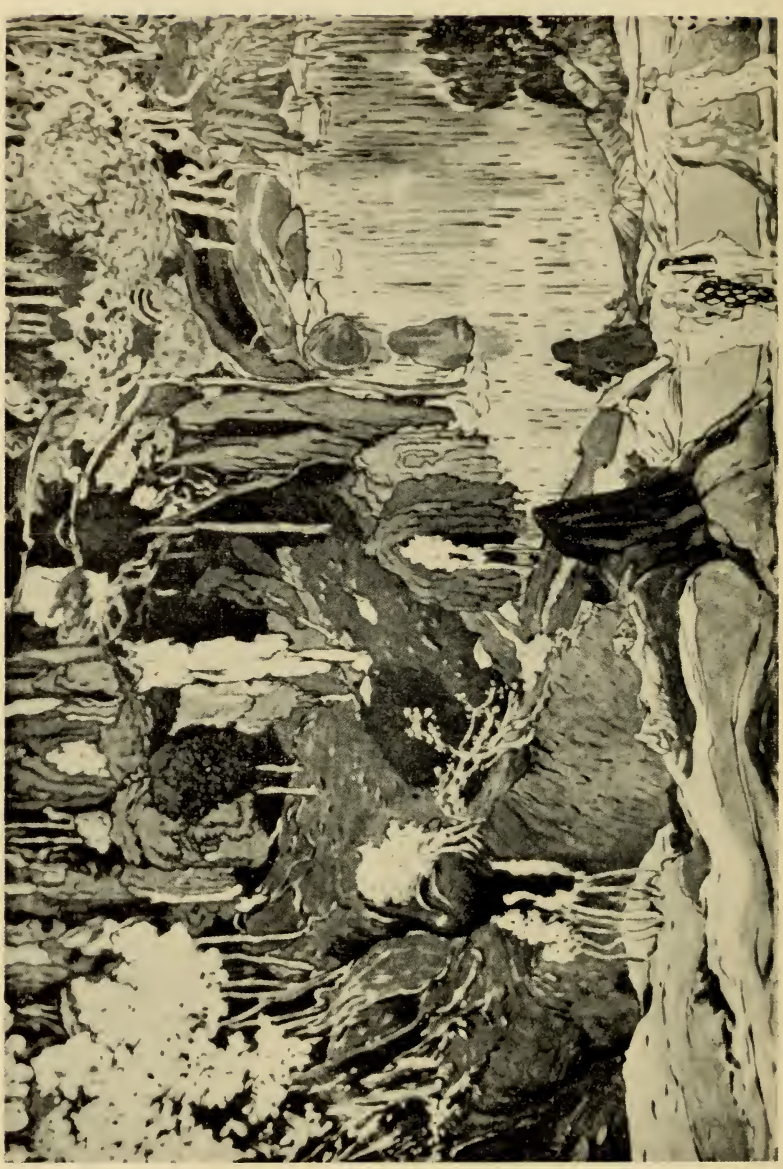

FIG. 11. BAKST: *Setting for "The Afternoon of a Faun"*
(Note Faun and Nymphs at bottom of picture)

enough to permit a co-operative enterprise, even without Debussy's conscious willingness.[11]

Two other personalities should be remembered in connection with this period of conflicting trends. One was Isadora Duncan, who did more than anyone else to revive the ancient Greek conception of the dance, and hence to pave the way for countless ballets which, like the Faun, portray characters of Greek myth and legend. She, like Nijinsky, went to Greek vase-painting in the museums for an inspiration, but, in the spirit of the older, late romantic generation, she preferred late Greek vase paintings (Fig. 6). Her dances in the Greek tradition were usually graceful, flowing and three-dimensional rather than flat and angular.

Nijinsky's Faun derives from the severe, black-figured vase-painting of the sixth and early fifth centuries B.C. and from sculptural reliefs of the same period (Fig. 7) rather than from the ripe classical paintings and Hellenistic sculpture of later centuries. Translating the archaic style into a new medium, the modern ballet, with all its resources of staging, lighting, and costume, Nijinsky tried to preserve its essential spirit by keeping all movements of himself and the Nymphs within a two-dimensional plane as much as possible. Right and left, up and down, they passed and gestured like figures on a screen, their faces mostly in profile even when their shoulders were in front view; their knees and elbows making pointed silhouettes. Lighting and scenery could have powerfully reinforced this two-dimensional effect, but did not.

Another distinctive personality, more intimately involved in the Russian Ballet's conception of the Faun, was Léon Bakst. In 1912, his style of painting and decoration seemed almost savagely, shockingly primitive, against the Louis XVI refinements of Paris and the gloomy browns of London and New York. But it was the barbaric splendor of medieval Russian, Tartar, and Persian despots, opulent in curves and swelling volumes, thickly overlaid with glitter and

[11] M. Jean Bersier of Paris informs me that he once saw Nijinsky dance the Faun at a private gathering at the home of Jacques Emile Blanche, long after its first stage presentation. For background, he says, Nijinsky chose a plain black curtain. For music, there was a string quartet with piano. Someone proposed the Debussy music, but Nijinsky indicated his distaste for it. He or someone else then proposed Borodine. A score was found and played without rehearsal to his satisfaction. The exact composition is not known but it was more accented, staccato, and violent than Debussy's.

luxurious textiles, rather than the starkly simple, rustic primitivism of archaic Greece. When Bakst tried to visualize the Faun, as a setting for Nijinsky's choreography, he too went only part way back to early Greece. His costumes for the nymphs (Figs. 8, 9) were not too far from the Greek originals, but his landscape background (Fig. 11) was thick, lush, and impressionistic, an overpowering mass of rocks and colorful vegetation which had no prototype in early Greek art.[12] Within it, the small figure of the Faun was almost lost. Bakst's drawings for the Faun (Fig. 10) were more curved than angular, with a floating, ornate veil of purple, green, and gold. The Faun, supposedly nude, had gilded horns and hair, and huge purple spots on his body. Bakst's conception was, indeed, more in the spirit of Debussy's music and of late nineteenth-century romanticism than in that of Nijinsky's archaistic pantomime. And what of Mallarmé's own cryptic remark, that the Faun should be danced *"au milieu d'un paysage avec des arbres en zinc"?*

These differences in conception are important for an understanding of *The Afternoon of a Faun* as a complex work of art, and for an understanding of its place in the history of art. They do, no doubt, reveal a lack of perfect consistency in the ballet itself, to say nothing of the differences between the ballet and the poem. But only the most severe of aesthetic purists would demand, or expect, perfect consistency of style in any complex work of art, especially one produced by several strongly individual personalities over a period of some thirty-six years. No one expects to find it in a medieval cathedral. In a ballet, likewise, the presence of competing stylistic influences may serve to add interest, while it weakens those values which arise from perfect unity.

What have we noticed about the relations among the arts in this collective enterprise? Even if the artistic personalities concerned had been very similar and with identical stylistic attitudes, the treatment would necessarily differ according to the medium. In treating the same theme, and in contributing to a compound form such as the ballet, each constituent art must select for emphasis certain aspects of the theme with which it is competent to deal. Literature, of course, is most able to convey abstract ideas; to make

[12] "Only the scenery was wrong," says Propert, *op. cit.*, p. 2. "It was a thing of intense beauty and the joy of two seasons, but it passed, presumably forever, with the passing of Nijinsky."

the reader or listener think of certain detached images, qualities, or relationships such as timidity or drowsiness rather than of concrete wholes such as nymphs, trees, and scarfs. It can also represent the inner life of a person—his intimate thoughts and fantasies, in all their subtle details and distinctions, while pantomime can only roughly hint at them. It enjoys more license in expressing tabooed ideas than does pantomime or painting in contemporary society. On the other hand, poetry is extremely limited in sensory stimuli, apart from its own peculiar music of words; it is pale, faint, and weak in comparison with orchestral music. Music also has its own powers of suggestion. Through its control of tempo and rhythm it can directly stimulate nervous and muscular tensions and relaxations in the hearer, and convey such images as those of rich or bare texture. These can convey a mood, such as that of drowsy reverie or emotional agitation, more vividly than mere words can do. But these suggestions, from music alone, are always vague and capable of many different interpretations. Printed program notes or theatrical pantomime tie them down to specific objects and meanings in the outer world. To anyone who has read Mallarmé's poem or seen the ballet, Debussy's music will always have more definite visual and emotional associations than it would otherwise have, but not necessarily more powerful or satisfactory ones.

The visual arts, including stage décor and dance, contribute their own rich and varied range of sensory stimuli and of organized designs which are satisfying in themselves. In addition, they are powerful means of telling a story. The color and design of costumes and background help to build up emotional atmosphere and to characterize individual persons. Pantomime suggests not only actions and types of character, but also the stronger, simpler types of emotional attitude, such as fear, lust, hatred, or mockery, which can be expressed in outward gestures. It is almost powerless to convey, especially in a large auditorium, the more subtle, indirect, complex moods and fantasies in which Mallarmé's poem abounds. Hence its "interpretation" of such feelings is bound to involve some simplification and exaggeration, with the omission of many subtle nuances.

When all these different approaches to a single theme are combined in the hands of capable artists, each revealing a different set of aspects and qualities in that theme, the result can be a very thorough exploration of the subject's possibilities. At the same time, it can

provide an extremely rich aesthetic diet of sounds, colors, shapes, and ever-changing designs. Of course, the ballet as a medium does not combine them all, as opera does; it leaves out the literary factor entirely. At least, the magnificence of Mallarmé's poem survives only as a memory in the minds of well-read spectators, or in the form of a brief prose account of the ballet's action, to be read in the program. Opera, which often includes some interludes of ballet, can thus claim to be more complete in its interpretation of a subject.

The question still remains of whether opera and ballet are the better for being thus complex and many-sided, as the Wagnerians believed them to be. Instead of dismissing the question as one of individual taste, let us say that the kinds of value to be derived from complex, heterogeneous works of art are somewhat different from those to be derived from simpler works of art. One kind is to be derived from seeing and hearing Wagner's *Parsifal* as an opera; the other from hearing the "Overture" to *Parsifal* as a concert piece. One is to be derived from seeing *The Afternoon of a Faun* as a ballet with décor and music; the other from reading the poem silently, or listening to the music alone. One floods our senses with a tremendous diversity of stimuli and our minds with a flood of symbols for interpretation, so that we have to strain our attention to perceive and understand them all at once. This can be highly interesting and exciting until fatigue sets in, as it often does before the end of a Wagner opera. The ballet is shorter, and there are no words to follow. But the music alone, or the poem alone, is easier to follow in so far as its stimuli are more similar: all directed to the eyes, or all to the ears. All the suggestive forms which it gives us for interpretation are of one kind: all words, or all musical tones. The words may be hard enough in their own way, as in the case of Mallarmé's poem. But we can perceive all the stimuli in one way, with less distraction. Having fewer incoming stimuli to perceive and understand, we can grasp those few more carefully. We can read the poem as slowly as we like, stopping to savor the full association of each phrase, the music of each line, and going back to an earlier phrase as often as we like. Furthermore, in reading the poem, or in listening to the orchestra alone, our minds are free to wander, to dream, and to fill in for ourselves the gaps in what the artist gives us. An imaginative reader or listener may prefer to visualize for himself the scene of the Faun and his elusive nymphs instead of having to accept a ready-

made version of it, provided by Messrs. Nijinsky and Bakst in conformity with the moral and aesthetic conventions of their day. In the same way, many lovers of the visual arts prefer them "straight" or undiluted, without accompanying words or music, which (for them) only confuse and distract without enhancing the value of the whole.

No doubt, the ability to perceive many different kinds of artistic stimuli at once, as in an opera, is one which can be developed, if we choose to do so, with increasing ease and enjoyment. The sound film with music is a new popular aid in such development. But some individuals are so strongly inclined in one direction, for example, toward music alone, that they see no need for enlarging their artistic horizons. Some demand a specialized artistic diet, others, a diversified one. Fortunately, we are not forced to choose between them, absolutely and finally. Debussy and Bakst can be enjoyed together or separately. Only the genius of Nijinsky is lost. Fortunately, again, the art of the dance in future can be preserved through the film, as pure visual movement, or with the sustaining power of music and of changing décor in full color.

INDEX

(NOTE: The abbreviation *JAAC* in footnotes means *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*).

Absolutism, 3, 77
Abstract styles, 200
Academic methods, 60
Adams, H., 138
Adler, A., 54
Aesthetic attitude, 272; experience, 61f, 84, 272, 277; situation, analysis of, 70
Aesthetics, aims of, 316; comparative, 31, 114; def. of, 134, 140, 145f; kinds of, 314; present situation in, 3, 67
Affect-laden, 274
Affects, 19, 45, 67, 166, 274
Afternoon of a Faun, 342f
Aiken, H. D., 109n, 112n
Alexander, S., 273n
Alford, J., 120n
Allen, G., 121, 149
American aesthetics, 96, 116f, 119, 125
American Society for Aesthetics, 117, 120
Analysis, comparative, 181; functional, 237
Anthony, St., 293
Anthropology, 51, 96, 115
Apollonian, 89, 246, 290
Apperception, 26, 185, 278
Applied aesthetics, 115
Appreciation, 21, 61, 88
Aquinas, St. T., 112, 268, 290, 322
Aristotle, 16, 136, 158
Art, arts, 227f; aims and limits of, 28
Art education, 60
Art-for-art's-sake, 76, 99, 159
Artist, artists, 58, 243, 302; kinds of, 306
Artistic attitude, 273
Association, 22, 71, 162
Atmosphere, 22
Attention, 20, 23
Attribution, 36
Augustine, St., 136
Authenticity, 336

Bach, J. S., 199, 204, 210, 217
Bacon, F., 119, 153f, 157, 261, 283
Bakst, L., 349
Baldwin, J. M., 262n
Ballet, 342
Barnes, A. C., 21n
Baroque, 42
Barrie, J. M., 26
Basch, V., 121, 148
Baudelaire, C., 138, 344
Bayer, R., 118n, 139
Beauty, 31, 33, 81f, 97, 140, 154, 229, 262f, 289
Beethoven, L. van, 82, 180, 219
Behaviorism, 56
Berenson, B., 138
Bernini, G., 205
Bersier, J., 359
Biography, 58, 65
Birkhoff, G. D., 85n, 218
Blake, W., 55, 308
Boas, G., 100n, 103n, 109
Bodkin, H., 94n
Bosanquet, B., 17n, 21n, 118, 121, 274, 290
Botticelli, S., 197
Boucher, F., 352n
Bouglé, C., 149
Brahms, J., 18, 186
British aesthetics, 119, 149
Buddhism, 202, 212, 224
Burckhart, J., 144

Cailliet, E., 346n
Calmette, G., 351
Caravaggio, M., 272n
Carpaccio, V., 32
Carritt, E. F., 118
Cassirer, E., 150
Categories, aesthetic, 17, 31, 178, 263, 300
Causal organization, 169
Causation, stylistic, 222
Cézanne, P., 24, 38, 167
Charcot, J. M., 90
Chardin, J. B. S., 178
Chopin, F. F., 189
Choreography, 343f
Circumstances, 285
Classic, 32, 180; classical, 290
Classification, 160, 190, 225, 329
Clothing, 247
Clown, 247
Cohn, W., 212n, 213n
Coleridge, S. T., 95, 118, 308
Combined arts, 342f
Commercial art, 253
Common association, 162
Communication, 231
Comparison of findings, 18, 43f; of forms and media, 28; of styles, 206
Complexity, 25, 169
Components, 40; developed, 170; elementary, 165; traits, 166
Composition, modes of, 170; representative, 171
Comte, A., 89f, 110, 148
Conditioned reflex, 51
Connoisseur, 65
Context, formal, 287
Contrast, 24
Control, 84, 87f, 151, 260
Coomaraswamy, A., 110n, 121n, 123n
Corneille, P., 245
Corot, J. B. C., 203
Correlation, 54, 80
Courbet, G., 256, 272n
Cowley, M., 118n
Cox, W. E., 226
Creation of art, 55, 59
Creativeness, 60
Criticism, 9f, 18ff, 66, 68, 138; tentative, 25
Croce, B., 34, 86, 111, 112, 113n, 118, 121, 290
Culture-epochs, 201
Cuvier, G., 89

Dante, 37, 167, 309, 321
Debussy, C., 30, 63, 138, 308, 343f
Decoration, 173
Definition, 33, 264f; stylistic, 200
Delacroix, E., 121, 138, 180, 308
Democratic, 99
Descartes, R., 124
Description, 8, 18f, 27, 67, 102f, 104, 160, 186, 192
Descriptive terms, 30
Design, 21, 173
Dessoir, M., 116, 119f, 121f, 135, 144, 145f, 150
Determinants, aesthetic, 284
Dewey, J., 11n, 46n, 52n, 98, 103n, 108, 111, 117, 119f, 131, 137, 151, 270, 272n, 282
Dhanamjaya, 121n
Diaghileff, S., 343f
Difficulties, in perception and criticism, 23f, 68f
Dilthey, H. A., 137, 150
Dionysian, 89, 246f, 291, 298
Distribution of a style, 195
Disunity, 24
Divisions of aesthetics, 114
Dostoevsky, F. M., 55
Duccio, 220
Ducasse, C. J., 109, 135n, 289n
Duncan, I., 359
Dürer, A., 134, 311

Eckermann, J. P., 306
Education, 39, 43, 60, 126, 155, 253, 338
Effects, 105; aesthetic, 238, 251; of art, 80, 83

Efficiency, 246
Eliot, T. S., 13n, 309
Ellis, H., 149
Emerson, R. W., 98, 112, 117, 291, 309
Emotions, 25, 27, 49
Empathy, 49
Empiricism, 46, 99
Ends, aesthetic, 242f, 245; of art, 158
Enjoyment, 62, 68
Environment, 12, 37
Epicureanism, 257, 321
Euclid, 184
Evaluation, vii, 67, 110, 239, 249, 258, 263, 327, 334
Evolution, 37, 51
Exhibition, 331
Experience, good, 249, 286, 297
Experimental, 3ff, 14ff, 61, 140
Expository composition, 172
Expression, 21, 231
Extensive styles, 198

Fantasy, 55; fantasy-building, 273
Faure, E., 38
Fechner, G., 5, 8f, 14, 49, 53, 90f, 141, 324
Fiedler, C., 143f, 150
Field of aesthetics, 156
Fields, stylistic, 199
Films, 252
Fine arts, 136, 227f, 328
Flaubert, G., 138
Fletcher, B., 149, 194, 206, 208
Focillon, H., 149
Form, 20, 160, 184f, 227f; analysis, 12f, 18ff, 35, 38, 40
Framework of form, 170, 175
France, A., 138
Frazer, J. G., 149
Freedom, 52, 84
Free expression, 53, 60
French aesthetics, 110, 123, 148
Freud, S., 54, 90, 93, 96, 118, 124
Fry, R., 41, 45f, 150, 288
Function, functional, 98, 227f, 237; functionalism, 231

Galabert, E., 148
Gauguin, P., 308, 352
Gayley, C. M., 120
General stylistic analysis, 203
Genetic approach, 12, 37
German aesthetics, 116, 150
Gestalt, 51
Ghiberti, L., 168
Gilbert, K., 111, 121f, 289n, 290
Giorgione, 32
Giotto, 37
Goethe, J. W. von, 32, 187, 306, 309
Gogh, V. van, 93, 308
Good, instrumental, 249; intrinsic, 249
Gosse, E., 345
Goya, F. J. de, 134
Greatness, 106
Greco, El, 37, 41f, 196
Greek dance, 359
Greek vase painting, 359
Greene, T. M., 132
Grotesque, 30
Grousset, R., 149, 212n
Guidebooks, 38
Gutenberg, J., 252
Guyau, J. M., 12

Habit (habits), 22, 26, 71, 74
Hambidge, J., 85, 218, 221
Harmony, 29
Haydn, F. J., 320
Hedonism, 256
Hegel, G. W. F., 112, 118, 121f, 140, 144
Helmholtz, H. L. F., 90
Hennequin, E., 148
Henry, W. E., 108
Heyl, B. C., 95n, 100n, 289n
Historical importance, 335
History of aesthetics, 120f; of effects of art, 79; of form and style, 35
Hitler, A., 118
Hobbema, M., 194
Hobbes, T., 119
Homer, 32, 242
Hugo, V., 308

Humanism, 255
Hungerland, H., 93n, 103n, 114n
Huxley, A., 309, 343
Hypothesis, 6, 15, 18, 26, 43, 47, 64, 80f, 83

Iconography, 36
Idealism, metaphysical, 9
Impressionists, 344
Indecent, 77
Individual differences, 48, 53, 67
Individualism, 77
Ingredients of art, 165
Instinct, 51
Internationalism, 96, 121f, 322
Interrelations of arts, 342
Introspection, 9, 56
Investigative attitude, 273

J.A.A.C., see *Journal of Aesthetics*
James, W., 52n, 90
Jefferson, T., 98
Joad, C. E. M., 269
Jordaens, J., 256, 272n
Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism (J.A.A.C.), 117
Jouveau-Dubreuil, G., 212n
Joyce, J., 320
Judgment, 27, 72
Jung, C. G., 54, 93f, 94n, 118

Kandinsky, W., 308, 312
Kant, I., 118, 121, 290
Keats, J., 180
Klee, P., 308
Knight, W., 120f, 290
Knowledge, 151
Krikorian, Y. H., 109n, 272n
Kuhn, H., 121, 147n, 289n, 290
Kunstwissenschaft, 135, 143f
Kuo Hsi, 121

Ladd, G. T., 120
Lalande, A., 140n, 148n, 272, 272n
Lalo, C., 5n, 118n, 121, 148f, 271
Lang, P. H., 210
Langer, S. K., 133
Language, 266
Learning, 51
Lehel, F., 149
Leichtentritt, H., 103n, 150
Liberalism, 158
Liebestod, 32
Lifar, S., 350n, 351
Linnaeus, C., 89, 190, 225
Literature, 21, 66, 163
Locke, J., 274
Lower-sense art, 164
Lucretius, 309, 321

Magic, 254
Mallarmé, S., 343f
Mâle, E., 149
Malraux, A., 138, 139n, 309
Manet, E., 343f, 353
Mann, T., 299, 309
Maritain, J., 111, 268
Martineau, J., 237
Marx, K., 110, 112, 128, 223, 315
Materials, 21, 184
Matisse, H., 74, 124, 320
McDougall, W., 301
Meaning, 34, 163, 265
Measurement, 5, 53, 85, 142, 215
Mechanization, 84
Medium, 28f
Mendel, G. J., 86
Metaphysics, 184n
Michelangelo, 145, 167, 298, 311
Milton, J., 32, 195, 308
Mimesis, 162
Mondor, H., 344n, 347n
Monet, C., 182
Monod-Herzen, E., 149
Moore, H., 320
Moral values, 76, 81
Morphology, 283; aesthetic, 114, 160, 183f; biological, 185
Motivation, 71
Moulton, R. G., 149
Mozart, W. A., 30, 219
Müller-Freienfels, R., 116, 119

Munro, T., 3n, 23n, 61n, 80n, 88n, 93n, 94n, 103n, 107n, 117n, 119n, 132, 142, 190n
Münsterberg, H., 120
Museum, 324, 330
Music, 16, 20, 40f, 81, 164

Nationalism, 122
Naturalism, 48, 58, 68, 79, 108, 119, 255, 262, 271n
Nature, 66
Negro sculpture, 352
Neo-Platonism, 290
Newton, I., 87
Nijinsky, V., 343f
Nonaesthetic values, 75

Objectivism, 267
Objectivity, 7, 10, 19, 160
Obscenity, 64
Observation, 8, 14, 38, 186
Ogden, C. K., 34n, 62, 270, 282
Opera, 362
Originality, 36
Osborne, H., 270, 277n

Painting, 20, 40f
Palladian, 194
Panofsky, E., 150
Pantomime, 346f
Parker, D. H., 21n, 62n, 93n, 121, 147n
Particular stylistic analysis, 211
Pascal, B., 124
Pater, W., 13, 16, 20, 288, 288n
Pattern, 20, 22
Pepper, S. C., 109, 132, 132n
Perception, 10, 20, 50, 278; experimental, 23; organic, 20, 23
Percepts, 274
Periods, historic, 201
Period styles, 200
Phidias, 32
Philosophy, 3, 16, 93, 109, 131, 135, 321; of history, 37
Picasso, P., 129, 213, 224, 320
Planning, 243
Plasticity, 23
Plato, 16, 82, 121, 136f, 158, 269, 280, 290, 298, 309
Play, 52
Poe, E. A., 308
Poem, 342f
Poetry, 20, 163
Poussin, N., 208
Practical, practice, 17, 82, 98, 116, 151, 273, 324
Pragmatism, 52
Prall, D. W., 294n
Prediction, 87f, 105; of effects and values, 72f, 82, 285
Preference, 5, 53, 73
Prerequisites, scientific, 90
Presentation, presented, 161
Production, 89; of art, 58
Program, functional, 241
Program music, 343
Projection, 19, 55, 274
Propert, W. A., 350n, 360n
Psychoanalysis, 54, 94
Psychology, 12, 90, 91f, 281; aesthetic, 47, 115, 183; comparative, 51; cultural, 96; educational, 52; general, 48, 66; genetic, 51; laboratory, 49, 140; physiological, 49, 71
Psychometric, 140
Psychopathology, 55
Puffer, E. D., 62n, 120n, 282
Purchasing art, 333

Quantitative, 53, 86, 178, 194, 215f; measurement, 5
Questionnaires, 38, 63

Raphael, 32, 179, 197, 220
Raymond, G. L., 93n, 132
Read, H., 94n, 150, 309
Reasoning, 52
Relativism, 4, 77f, 100, 123, 319, 340
Religion, 254
Religious values, 75
Rembrandt, 30, 167
Renoir, P. A., 219

Representation, representative, 21, 40
Representative composition, 171
Response, aesthetic, 285
Reynolds, J., 308
Richards, I. A., 34n, 62, 149, 270, 282
Riegl, A., 144, 150
Rimbaud, A., 308
Rodin, A., 29, 298
Romantic, 32, 180, 291
Romanticism, 311, 319, 343
Rouault, G., 269
Rousseau, J. J., 52, 309
Rubens, P. P., 178, 195, 225
Rudrauf, L., 118n, 149
Rules of art, 59, 80f, 318
Runes, D., 117, 262n
Ruskin, J., 291
Russell, B., 56, 129
Russian Ballet, 350

Sachs, C., 91n, 150
Santayana, G., 9, 21n, 58, 81, 103n, 119ff, 131, 137, 270, 272n, 274, 309
Sappho, 241
Sartre, J. P., 138
Scarcity, 337
Schiller, J. C. F. von, 52, 119
Schillinger, J., 85n, 221
Schneider, H., 150
Schoen, M., 63n, 94n, 104n
Schopenhauer, A., 118
Schubert, F. P., 41
Science, scientific, vii, 4f, 11, 84, 85f, 119, 153; meaning of, 7
Scott, W., 120
Sculpture, 20
Self-analysis, 56, 70f
Self-observation, 56
Semantics, 95, 115, 131
Semiotics, 131
Shakespeare, W., 77, 167, 188, 217
Shaw, G. B., 309
Simplicity, 30
Smith, J., 207
Smith, P., 210
Social science, 91
Socrates, 43, 136, 287
Sorokin, P. A., 91n, 217
Souriau, E., 118n, 149
Spatial organization, 168; spatio-temporal, 168
Specialization, 127, 186
Spencer, H., 12, 119, 121
Spengler, O., 112, 118, 145, 150
Spitzer, H., 120n
Stage décor, 343f
Standards, 67, 74, 107, 294; general, 80; social, 77
Stekel, W., 54
Stein, L., 39n, 57
Stimulus, 236
Strauss, R., 30
Stravinsky, I., 74, 217, 320, 350n
Style (styles), 30, 42, 177, 192f, 320
Stylistic analysis, 192f
Subjectivism, 267
Subject matter, 21
Substyles, 197
Success, 246, 248
Suggestion, suggested, 161
Supernaturalism, 108
Symbol, symbolism, 32, 34, 36, 54, 133, 162
Symbolist poets, 344
Synaesthesis, 62
Synthesis, 127, 322

Tagore, R., 246
Taine, H. A., 12, 37, 110, 144n, 148
Taste, 65, 154
Tattooing, 233
Technics, 259
Technology, aesthetic, 158, 250, 257; humanistic, 247
Temporal organization, 168
Terms, critical, see *Words*
Tertiary qualities, 9, 19, 45, 64, 274
Tests, 53, 142
Thematic composition, 173
Theme, 22
Therapeutic, 55, 76

Theresa, St., 205
Thibaudet, A., 352n
Tintoretto, J. R., 32, 167
Titian, 32, 37
Tolstoy, L., 81, 231, 269
Tovey, D., 149
Tragedy, 16
Trait-complex, 193
Traits, 166; stylistic, 192f
Transitory conditions, 71
Transmission, modes, 161
Trends in style, 213
Types, 177, 200, 212; of form, 30, 192f

Ugly, 33
Unconscious, 55
Uniformity, unity, 24, 81, 241
Uniqueness, 31, 44, 78, 188f
Utilitarian, 98, 227f; composition, 171
Utitz, E., 116, 119, 146

Valéry, P., 13n, 138, 148, 309
Value, 10, 67, 100, 227f, 239, 294; standards, 67; theory, 68, 115
Variety, 24
Venturi, L., 143f
Verification, 16
Verlaine, P., 308
Véron, E., 148
Veronese, P., 32
Vinci, Leonardo da, 157, 169, 187, 196, 232, 308, 311, 335, 343
Visual arts, 164
Vitruvius, 85n, 218, 307, 310
Volkelt, J., 300n

Wagner, R., 70, 129, 195, 308, 343
Waley, H. D., 62
Webster, *New International Dictionary,* 87, 161, 237, 266, 291, 299
Wells, H. G., 309
Whistler, J., 138, 344
Whitman, W., 81, 125, 219, 243, 308
Wight, F. S., 134n
Will to believe, 52
Winckelmann, J. J., 122, 146, 209, 283
Witmer, L., 141
Wölfflin, H., 119, 144f, 150, 193f, 205f, 208f, 210, 214, 225
Wood, J., 34n, 62, 270, 282
Word-magic, 33, 83
Words, 20, 26, 30, 33, 41, 50, 57, 64, 275, 288
Wordsworth, W., 30
Works of art, 90, 234
Wright, F. L., 138, 308
Wundt, W., 90

Zola, E., 77, 109, 256, 272n

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About the Author

Thomas Munro is Curator of Education at the Cleveland Museum of Art, and Professor of Art at Western Reserve University. He is editor of the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, and is now a member of the Board of Directors of the College Art Association.

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